This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

MEMORIAL ADDRESSES
LIFE AND CHARACTER OF
MICHAEL C. KERR
DEC. 16TH 1876 AND FEB. 27TH 1877.

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA LIBRARY
X004873300

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

47.1:
K46

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Michael C. Kerr.

ENGRAVED AND PRINTED
AT THE
BUREAU OF ENGRAVING & PRINTING,
U. S.
TREASURY DEPARTMENT.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

MEMORIAL ADDRESSES

ON THE

LIFE AND CHARACTER

OF

MICHAEL CRAWFORD KERR,

(SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES.)

DELIVERED IN THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES DECEMBER 16, 1876,
AND IN THE SENATE FEBRUARY 27, 1877.

PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF CONGRESS.

WASHINGTON:
GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE.
1877.

Digitized by Google

189033

AN ACT to authorize the printing and distribution of the memorial addresses on the life and character of the late Michael C. Kerr, Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That twelve thousand copies of the memorial addresses on the life and character of the late Michael C. Kerr, Speaker of the House of Representatives, be printed, three thousand copies for the use of the Senate and nine thousand copies for the use of the House of Representatives; and that the Secretary of the Treasury have engraved and printed the portrait of Mr. Kerr to accompany the same, for which the sum of five hundred dollars or so much thereof as may be necessary is hereby appropriated out of any moneys in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated.

Approved March 1, 1877.

Digitized by Google

ADDRESSES

ON THE

DEATH OF MICHAEL C. KERR.

PROCEEDINGS IN THE HOUSE.

TUESDAY, *December* 5, 1876.

Mr. ANDREW H. HAMILTON, by unanimous consent, submitted the following resolution, viz:

Resolved, That the special order for Saturday, December, 16, at one o'clock, shall be the presentation of suitable resolutions on the death of Hon. M. C. KERR, Speaker of this House during its last session, and the expression by the members of the esteem in which he was held for his unblemished character, for his eminent services as a Representative, and for his ability and impartiality as a presiding officer.

The resolution was unanimously adopted.

SATURDAY, *December* 16, 1876.

The hour of one o'clock p. m. having arrived, the House, under its previous order, proceeded to pay the last honors to the memory of Hon. MICHAEL C. KERR, late a Representative from the State of Indiana, and Speaker of this House.

OBSEQUIES OF HON. MICHAEL C. KERR.

Mr. HAMILTON, of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, I rise for the purpose of submitting resolutions of respect to the memory of our late

Digitized by Google

Speaker; and I ask that the resolution introduced by me, making these memorial services a special order for to-day at one o'clock, be read.

The Clerk read as follows:

Resolved, That the special order for Saturday, December 16, at one o'clock, shall be the presentation of suitable resolutions on the death of Hon. M. C. KERR, Speaker of this House during its last session, and the expression by the members of the esteem in which he was held for his unblemished character, for his eminent services as a Representative, and for his ability and impartiality as a presiding officer.

ADDRESS OF MR. HAMILTON, OF INDIANA.

Mr. SPEAKER: MICHAEL C. KERR was born at Titusville, in the State of Pennsylvania, March 15, 1827. When he was twenty-five years of age he entered upon the practice of the law in the city of New Albany, Indiana. At twenty-seven, he was city attorney; at twenty-eight, prosecuting attorney of Floyd County; at twenty-nine, took his seat in the legislature of Indiana; at thirty-five, was the official reporter of the supreme court of that State and edited five volumes of its reports; at thirty-seven, was elected to the Thirty-ninth Congress of the United States, and was afterward elected to the Fortieth, Forty-first, Forty-second, and Forty-fourth. He died the Speaker of the House, at seven o'clock and thirty minutes p. m., on the 19th day of August, A. D. 1876, at Rockbridge Alum Springs, in the State of Virginia, at the age of forty-nine years, five months, and four days.

Such is the brief record of one who, for twenty-two years—nearly a quarter of a century—had been selected by the people among whom he lived to hold important trusts.

At each step of his career he firmly established his footing, so that

Digitized by Google

it was easy to ascend. Scarcely had he been ready to surrender an office, when one more prominent was tendered him. So well did he discharge the duties assigned him, so exemplary was his conduct, that the people of his district delighted to honor him. His home was in a portion of the State which was early settled, on the Ohio River, the highway of travel. He was surrounded by able men, yet he was selected to be the recipient of such honors as the voters of his own and adjoining counties could bestow. When he was the democratic candidate for Congress in 1872 for the State at large, he was defeated by only 162 votes, while the other democratic candidates on the State ticket, with the single exception of Thomas A. Hendricks for governor, were defeated by majorities ranging from 533 to 2,568; and in the November election following, General Grant's majority was 22,507. Yet he was not one who could have been called a popular man. He was not all things to all men. With a will of iron, he never could have been bent from his convictions of duty. Place and power would have been too dearly bought by even the slightest concession. He obtained the offices which he filled by the confidence which was felt in his integrity, so convinced was every one that under no circumstances would he ever sacrifice his personal purity, the people's interests, or his country's honor. In his campaigns he was earnest, but not impassioned. He appealed to the judgment, not to the prejudices, of his audience. A candidate for the Forty-fourth Congress, differing from the greater portion of his constituents, who were members of the same party, on the financial question, he would not compromise. He made his contest squarely on that issue. Though he did not carry his district by its full democratic strength, yet he was elected by a majority of over 1,500; many of those who opposed his financial views were so firmly convinced of his integrity and so proud of his record, that they cast their votes for him; and yet he was opposed by a man who had achieved a State reputation, and who, up to that time, had stood

Digitized by Google

among the foremost men of the democratic party in that portion of Indiana.

Mr. KERR took his seat for the first time in the Thirty-ninth Congress. He early obtained a prominent position, and not only maintained it, but also advanced his reputation year by year.

During the sessions when he stood upon the floor of the House he was with the minority. It was during stormy periods; but even in the midst of debate he commanded the respect of all, and yet he was at times severe and denunciatory.

As the presiding officer, he was calm, dignified, and impartial. What he might have been as the Speaker, had he been in perfect health, can be easily determined by what he was when worn to a shadow, with disease preying upon his vitals, and torture rending his frame. With the exception of a lack of breath and a countenance which told of suffering, there was nothing in his manner, as a presiding officer, of the invalid whose life hung upon a thread; there was none of the irritability which usually accompanies the disease that is incurable.

Mr. KERR was a partisan; I mean by a "partisan" one who does not swerve from the views and principles which are promulgated by those connected with him in a political organization, but on the contrary, with unflinching tenacity, clings to them and advocates them; carries out those measures which advances them, and endeavors with boldness and energy to place his party in power—yet, as "The Speaker," he knew neither friend nor foe, he recognized only the individual rights of the members and parliamentary law. The moral power, unstained honor, true faith in pure motives, unswerving devotion to principle, unsullied patriotism is, as the combination of genius and talent or genius educated in the mental organization, an inherent characteristic, educated and increased by the man himself, which places him upon an elevation from which it were not possible for him to descend. This power Mr. KERR possessed.

Digitized by Google

During all the years of his public service, not a breath of suspicion was ever directed toward him until a baseless charge was brought to offset charges against other public men—a charge so unfounded and unsupported that even his political opponents blushed for their connection with it. His intense energy sustained him during that most extraordinary trial. When the accusation came, he asked no postponement on account of ill-health. Raising himself from what his friends knew to be his dying-bed, his strong will overcame his illness, put temporary life and vigor into his emaciated and tottering frame, and bore him calm and dignified before the committee and his accuser, where he demonstrated the utter falsity of the charge.

When the negative man dies there is no muffled bell tolling in the heart of the people. He is like the worm; a part may be cut off and crushed, but each of the hundred other parts has a similar life, which still continues. But when the man of positive character—of high sense of public duty and a will to carry out at all hazards his convictions—is taken away, there is a feeling that a vacancy has been created which cannot be filled, not that a piece of the long body of humanity has been cut off and that the rest can crawl along as well without it. MICHAEL C. KERR could have led a forlorn hope. He could have breasted popular opinions and gone to the stake a martyr to his principles.

At any time the death of a pure man, an upright statesman, occasions a blank which it is difficult to fill. But in an age like this, when a deviation from public probity is looked upon as a slight affair, when public men who have soiled their hands oftentimes, instead of being denounced have been indorsed by the people, then the loss of a man who has no defilement on his person, nor a stain upon his garments, is irreparable. Years have passed, and years to come may sleep among the by-gones, and the student not be able to find a more perfect parallel to Andrew Marvel, in his firmness and decision of character and in his pure and lofty patriotism, than is afforded by the life

Digitized by Google

of MICHAEL C. KERR. Immaculate he stands out, a tall palm-tree in the moral desert of the age, gladdening the heart of humanity, a cheering evidence that the wells of political probity and public honesty have not all dried up.

The distinguished member of this House from Massachusetts, in the Senate Chamber, arraigned the public men of the day for their dishonesty and corruption. How gratifying it must be to an American to turn from the picture he draws to the name (*nomen clarum*) of MICHAEL C. KERR on the monument in a cemetery of the State which has reason to be proud of the example it has given to the country of unimpeachable integrity.

The resistance Mr. KERR made to the advance of the disease which was to terminate his existence; the determination to occupy his place in this House in spite of the ravages made upon his system; the manner in which he endured physical and mental torture, was marvelous. He demonstrated that he had learned—

> Life's hardest lesson—without groan
> To suffer and endure.

The final summons came. The response was not merely the calm "*adsum*" but also the "*semper paratus*" of the man who felt that his life had been unspotted, and who had used well the talent which had been intrusted to him.

As—

> The days lay down their brightness,
> And bathing in splendor die,

so MICHAEL C. KERR went to his rest, surrounded by a halo of moral beauty, followed to the tomb by the regrets of the entire nation, and left behind a name synonymous with public probity and public honor.

> He has done the work of a true man;
> Crown him, honor him, love him;
> Weep over him tears of woman;
> Stoop manliest brows above him!

Digitized by Google

Address of Mr. Kelley, of Pennsylvania.

Mr. Speaker: The sudden death of a strong man in the vigor of early manhood fills his companions with awe and constrains the strongest and most youthful of them to pause and consider how frail may be his tenure of life. We all remember the thrill that ran through the House when, near the close of the last session of Congress, the local telegraph brought us notice of the instant death of that magnificent specimen of manhood, Hon. E. Y. Parsons, of Kentucky, whose manly beauty had commanded our admiration, and whose conversation, pregnant with intelligence, wit, and humor, had charmed some of us but a little hour before.

The death of Hon. Michael C. Kerr was not sudden. We had all seen from day to day, or week to week, the fatal inroads disease was making on his always slender frame. In his case we saw how high purposes and overmastering will could hold death at bay; for common consent denied him three months of life from the day on which he entered upon his duties as Speaker of the House; yet it was not until after the close of an unusually long session that in the presence of his wife and only child, a son in whom he hoped his virtues would live, he welcomed death as release from pain, and with serene courage passed to the unknown.

I first met Mr. Kerr when he entered the Thirty-ninth Congress, but years elapsed before I came to know him intimately. Indeed, until we were associated on the Committee of Ways and Means of the Forty-second Congress I had felt that we should never know each other well. Starting from almost any given stand-point in the investigation of public questions, such were our instincts or had been our early training, that we traveled in diverging lines and rested in opposite conclusions.

Digitized by Google

He seemed to me to have little special fitness for public life. He not only never attempted the arts of the demagogue, but loathed them in his inmost soul. Social life, other than the charmed circle which graced his home, seemed to offer him no attraction. His conversation was grave, and rarely, if ever, sparkled with wit or was softened by a stroke of humor. His tendencies were evidently not toward the excitement of public life. He loved his profession—the law—the labors of which were congenial to his tastes, and when he sought honor at the hands of his fellow-citizens it was in the line of that profession; thus, though admitted to practice in 1852, he was elected city attorney by the people of New Albany in 1854; in the next year the citizens of Floyd County promoted him to the office of prosecuting attorney, and in 1862 the legislature elected him reporter of the supreme court of Indiana, which office he filled till elected to the Thirty-ninth Congress. The fidelity and ability with which he performed the duties of this office is attested by the esteem in which the five volumes of reports that bear his name are held by the profession. During his service on the Committee of Ways and Means the impression I express was confirmed by the fact that he was ever ready, though his strength was even then much impaired by disease, to give special study to any question referred to the committee which involved legal intricacies or nice judicial consideration. I can recall several such cases, and remember that in reporting his judgment in each of them it was the jurist and not the politician who spoke. I am sure that all our colleagues on that committee will confirm my judgment on this point.

Yet Mr. KERR was a man of positive political convictions and had the courage of his opinions, which, on the cardinal questions that divided parties during his service in Congress, were those of his party, and his fearless expressions of them won for him its confidence in a remarkable degree. So strong was his will and so absolute were his convictions, that it was impossible for him to trim or play the time-server. In none of his numerous speeches during the

Digitized by Google

time Congress was engaged in the work of reconstruction can a sentence of double or doubtful meaning be found.

On the question of the best method of raising revenue for the support of the Government and the extinguishment of the debt, he and I were in constant antagonism. He regarded duties imposed either incidentally or directly for the protection of capital ventured in manufactures in the hope of developing our natural resources and establishing our commercial independence, as a violation of the Constitution and an injury to the consumer. He would, could he have found it practicable, have abolished all custom-houses, and laboring to that end he steadily strove to reduce impost duties to the lowest possible rate and to limit their application to the smallest number of articles. Here, again, the integrity of his intellect and purposes was shown. He left it to others to prate of revenue reform while really intending the establishment of free trade and the overthrow of the protective system. He had faith in the intelligence of the people, and believed that he who discussed such questions was bound to state his faith with perfect clearness, and to submit to those he would influence the arguments on which it rested.

He was a whole-hearted and courageous man, and none could know him well, as I learned to do in the committee-room and during the last session of Congress, when his sufferings frequently attracted me to his side, without finding under his rigid exterior a gentleness of character and a depth of affection that were most winning.

If truth is made apparent by the vigorous conflict of opinion, and if, as I believe, the grandest treasures of a republic are its men of manly purpose and dauntless will, our country suffered greatly in the early death of Mr. KERR; for, while life and strength permitted, he was ever ready to discuss with absolute integrity of purpose and expression every question that concerned the welfare of the Republic.

It must have been the strength of his convictions on political

Digitized by Google

questions that tempted him to yield to the persuasive voice of friends and enter the arena of national politics, and I have often thought had it not been for the exciting labors into which he was thus drawn, his life would probably have been prolonged and his name filled an exalted place in the judicial records of his adopted State and the nation at large.

Address of Mr. Haymond, of Indiana.

Mr. Speaker: We have assembled on an occasion of unusual solemnity. The late distinguished Speaker of the House of Representatives, Hon. Michael C. Kerr, is no more. He was stricken by the hand of death soon after the close of the first session of this Congress. He has passed away; his mission on earth has ceased and his labors have been finished. We shall see his face and hear his voice no more, but his good name, his well-earned fame, and his noble qualities still live in the memory of all who knew him, and will not be soon forgotten. Universal sympathy was extended to him during his protracted sufferings from mortal disease, and the whole country beheld with surprise and admiration the pertinacity and bravery exhibited by him in the discharge of the responsible and laborious duties of his office. A nation, without respect to party, mourns his untimely departure, and it becomes appropriately the duty of those who were his associates on this floor to render a heartfelt and formal tribute of respect to his memory.

It is a charitable sentiment, at least, that no one should speak ill of the dead; that their errors, faults, and frailties, whatever they may have been, should be covered by the mantle of oblivion; but it does not follow from this that their virtues, their endearing qualities, their noble deeds, and valuable services to the state should remain unre-

Digitized by Google

corded and suffered to pass without appropriate notice and action on the part of their associates and survivors. These should be appropriately recorded and transmitted, that the light which once shone and illumined the pathway of thousands should not return to darkness. It is a duty devolving upon the living to perpetuate the memory of those who were good or great, who achieved distinction in some department or sphere of life, who filled high positions with credit to themselves and benefit to their country, and who by their talents or genius have rendered valuable service to mankind. The character and personal history of such belong to the people, and should descend as a legacy to posterity. What is a country without a biography of its distinguished men and its public benefactors? What a blank would there have been in the history of Greece and Rome if there had been no biographical sketches or special mention made of their philosophers, poets, orators, statesmen, and heroes! It would have been a shadow without substance; a skeleton divested of those vital parts essential to form—life and beauty. The character of a nation and the criterion of its civilization may be judged by the intelligence, honesty, and purity of those who are appointed its rulers. It is our boast to rejoice in the eminent qualities of the founders of this Republic. While the spirit of freedom pervades the minds of the American people they cannot cease to hold in veneration the illustrious champions of independence. The names of Washington, Adams, Franklin, Jay and Hamilton, Marshall and Jefferson, will be handed down from generation to generation and sounded with praise while free institutions exist upon the earth. Those names will be transmitted as synonyms of great ideas—liberty and self-government.

The duties and responsibilities of men never cease. Each generation at every stage of progress will have new perplexities to encounter, new labors to perform, and new difficulties to surmount. "Peace hath its victories no less renowned than war," and to the statesman of the present time there is open a wide and constantly expanding

Digitized by Google

field of usefulness, in which there is room for the exercise of disinterested patriotism, of the highest order of abilities, and of the most diversified and extensive knowledge. Hence while our Government endures, new events will enter into its history, and new actors, from time to time, will appear upon the political stage. Their names will deserve to be honored for whatever valuable service they may render to the country, for their eminent qualities, and for their fidelity to the great principles of self-government.

The name of the late Speaker deserves to be mentioned in honorable connection with his departed and distinguished predecessors. I shall make but few allusions to his personal history, but leave this duty to those who have been longer and more intimately acquainted with him than myself; and what has been already said in this respect by others need not be repeated by me. No fulsome adulation can add anything to his well-earned reputation or to the perpetuity of his fame. I shall attempt nothing beyond what a brief personal acquaintance with him, the impressions formed of his character, and what may be inferred from his public acts, will justify me in stating. Though cut down in the prime of life, at that period when the mental faculties had just attained their full development, he had already achieved distinction in his own State for his public services and sterling ability, and had also won for himself a national reputation as a legislator.

Mr. KERR was endowed by nature with a strong and well-balanced intellect. It was of the synthetic order, and peculiarly adapted to the investigation of subjects requiring the highest reasoning powers.

Though an able and forcible speaker, he was not gifted with the commanding eloquence of a Clay or Webster; but as a practical statesman he evinced unusual sagacity and a thorough comprehension of public affairs, as well as of the theory and powers of the Federal Government. With ample opportunities, health, and years, he would have ranked among the foremost statesmen the country has produced. His talents were of a high order, but he did not alone

Digitized by Google

trust to natural endowments. His life from early age was that of an ardent and indefatigable student. His chief ambition was to acquire knowledge and gain mastery of whatever he undertook. His pecuniary circumstances in early life were very limited, but his ambition to obtain a good education, both literary and professional, was reached by his devotion to hard study and by his indomitable perseverance. A successful career of professional life opened before him. His talents and qualifications were duly appreciated. He had but fairly entered upon this course when he was called by the people to important public trusts.

As a member of the legislature of Indiana, as a reporter of the supreme court of that State, as a Representative in Congress and Speaker of the House of Representatives, he discharged every duty with unswerving fidelity and with rare ability. In every capacity of public employment which he was elected to fill he exhibited the traits of honesty, inflexible integrity, and a sacred regard for the inviolability of public trust.

His honesty, purity of character, and integrity were unimpeachable and above suspicion. He never compromised his principles for the sake of expediency, but carried his convictions of justice, honor, and right into whatever he undertook. He guarded the public interests intrusted in his hands with the same jealousy and care that he would his own private affairs. He occupied a position in American politics similar to that attributed to Aristides, "surnamed the just," in the affairs of Athens. Like the great "commoner," Henry Clay, he "*would rather be right than President.*"

A man's character is generally formed by himself. Adventitious circumstances may divert the mind into unexpected channels for a while, but when there is an inflexible purpose founded upon sound convictions, the character of the man will be molded in accordance therewith.

Mr. KERR shaped the course of his life in pursuance to a fixed pur-

Digitized by Google

pose. The acquisition of knowledge was one of the chief objects of his life, and his assiduity and perseverance to obtain this end were seldom equaled. He had none of that ambition that would lead him to aspire to places of honor by any means that would conflict with his well-confirmed notions of justice, morality, and integrity. He had no sectional ambition or animosity to gratify. His patriotism was of that character not bounded by State lines, but which comprehended the interests of the entire country. He was ever a champion of the great principles of self-government and constitutional liberty. He was ever jealous and watchful of all encroachments of power against the bulwark of freedom, the Federal Constitution.

His recent services as Speaker of this House afford us a clear conception of his nature and the sublime traits of his character. In pursuance to his convictions of duty, he essayed each day to preside over the deliberations of the House, and only retired from his post when his wearied and exhausted frame would no longer permit him to remain. His indomitable will and wonderful energies supported him after it was apparent that his physical powers were unequal to the task. But hope seemed to cheer him on with its delusive promises. His mind was clear and unsubdued, while the earthly tabernacle was sinking from the consuming fires within. Summer came, and its depressing heat so overcame him that he was at length forced to abandon his post of duty, leave the city, and seek refuge in the salubrious atmosphere amid the mountains of Virginia. But the change produced only a temporary effect. His soul calmly resigned the tenement no longer fitted to retain it, and took its peaceful flight to that "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." The death of such a man as the late Speaker, at this perplexing period of our history, is a national calamity.

His broad patriotism, his unsullied integrity, and his unswerving fidelity to principle and justice, were such as commanded the respect of the whole country, and would have proved invaluable had he con-

Digitized by Google

tinued with us. The commonwealth whose interests he has so faithfully guarded will long miss his services in the national councils and mourn the loss of one of her brightest jewels.

> His life was gentle, and the elements
> So mixed in him, that Nature might stand up
> And say to all the world, *This was a man.*

ADDRESS OF MR. MONROE, OF OHIO.

Mr. SPEAKER: I was not favored with such a degree of intimacy with the late distinguished Speaker of this House as was enjoyed by many members, and hence may not present so accurate, and certainly cannot present so complete, a view of his character as could others. But such opportunity as I had to become acquainted with him greatly interested me, and it may not be amiss to state frankly just the impression which his qualities of mind and heart made upon me.

In listening to him, whether in conversation or in debate, the first quality which arrested attention was his intellectual clearness. His thought came to him well defined and in a strong light. He had a certain, definite thing to say; he knew precisely what it was and what he wished to accomplish by saying it. What he clearly saw, he clearly communicated. The hearer could seldom be in doubt as to his meaning. He was called reticent. But until he could think and speak clearly, he had nothing to say. The habit of his mind could accept no other conditions of speech. In debate, his single aim was to be understood. No temptation to appear eloquent or sparkling could turn him aside from this end. His mind rejected ornament. Illustration by means of comparison and figures of speech, he did not much need. A severe simplicity and directness marked all his efforts.

With this perspicuity of thought and expression, not unnaturally, was associated a high degree of intellectual force. He had power

Digitized by Google

of statement, felicity in arrangement, logical skill, and depth of conviction. These qualities gave great vigor and effectiveness to his discourse. His argument always looked strong, if not impregnable, and he was always in earnest. One who differed from him and refused to accept his conclusions, was compelled to admit that they were urged with a certain convincing force which it was not easy to resist.

To these intellectual qualities must be added another which was largely moral—the judicial candor and fairness of his mind. This was not always very apparent upon first acquaintance. He exhibited a certain outward severity in debate which did not give promise of that capacity for impartial judgment which he really possessed. His sharp-cut sentences sometimes wounded the feelings and gave offense. But further acquaintance showed that this sternness was more of manner than of spirit. It was in great measure due to nervous conditions resulting from ill-health, and did injustice to his real character. One who approached him to call attention to new aspects of questions under discussion, found him not only an attentive listener but often willing to admit a measurable modification of his own views. His convictions, when clearly formed, were, no doubt, firmly held; but he antagonized principles rather than men, and respected the character and the argument of his opponent. This quality of judicial fairness became more apparent after his election to the office of Speaker. I think it must then have been evident to the whole House that it was his earnest desire to administer the duties of his high place with perfect impartiality.

Closely allied to this quality of judicial candor was his undoubted goodness of heart. It must be admitted that this, also, was not always freely acknowledged at first. In the Forty-second Congress I sometimes heard him spoken of as cold, reserved, and unsympathetic. But those who knew him well felt that this coldness was superficial. It sprung in part from a diffidence which was both genuine and creditable. The really modest estimate which he placed

Digitized by Google

upon his own powers and accomplishments made him slow to engage the attention of others, except as duty demanded. His reserved manner grew, in part, also, out of the state of his health. We sometimes forget that that uninterrupted flow of cordial feeling which is so charmingly expressed in the manner of some men, is often as much the result of sound physical conditions as of sweetness of disposition. We should not mistake a bad digestion for a bad heart, or confound a torpid liver with moral indifference to the happiness of others. All who had admission to the inner circle of his friendships bear witness that he was essentially warm-hearted, kindly, and affectionate, and that his attachments were as tenacious and enduring as they were disinterested and cordial. That he deeply appreciated kindness and a just estimation from others was especially evident on one marked occasion, when several gentlemen had shown a friendly interest in his good name upon this floor. With tears coursing down his cheeks, he said to a distinguished member of this House, "Convey to those gentlemen the thanks of a dying man." It was done, and the message was received with a feeling almost as deep as that which prompted it.

But, after all, the distinguished and crowning virtue of his character was his absolute integrity and uprightness. Of course I do not mean merely that he was honest and pure in all pecuniary affairs, but that he had a hearty love for truth and rectitude for their own sake and in all their applications. He had the keenest sense of honor, and feared a stain upon his fame more than political defeat—more than death. A fact bearing upon this point I have from the best authority—that of his able successor in this place. The last time he was nominated for Congress it was well known that he was, in the phrase of the day, "a hard-money man." But there were large numbers of "soft-money men" in his district, and his friends feared that the open advocacy of his views would greatly reduce his majority, if it did not result in his defeat. A committee waited upon him and

Digitized by Google

suggested that it might be more prudent in his addresses to the people not to speak at length upon the importance of a return to specie payments. "Gentlemen," was his reply, "it would be better that I should be defeated, and that my party should be defeated in me, than that I should knowingly lead one man to vote for me under a delusion."

To conclude, though often weak in body he was thoroughly strong and sound in all that constitutes a rational being—sound in mind, sound in heart, sound in character; and he died, as such a man might be expected to die, in the profession of that Christian faith whose mission it is to impart health and soundness to the race of man.

To us it belongs to speak rather of character as it is revealed to us here than of the destiny which awaits it hereafter; but as I sat this morning pondering my sad and yet inspiring theme, there involuntarily recurred to me the well-known lines of that remarkable man of our time who has written the sweetest and most thoughtful memorial poetry in all literature:

> And, doubtless, unto him is given
> A life that bears immortal fruit
> In such great offices as suit
> The full-grown energies of heaven.

Address of Mr. Holman, of Indiana.

Mr. Speaker: In the closing hour of the last session of Congress, as we were preparing to leave this hall and return after a weary absence to the blessed shelter of our homes, in the midst of the tumult and excitement incident to that event there was a pervading sentiment that we could not adjourn without expressing to Michael C. Kerr, the then honored Speaker of this House, then absent from the capital and seeking in the mountains of Virginia a re-invigoration of his failing powers, some words of sympathy; and we all remember how well

Digitized by Google

the universal sentiment of this House was expressed by the eloquent and kindly words of the distinguished gentleman from Massachusetts, [Mr. BANKS.] This message of friendship and of generous sympathy from his associates in a high public trust, from this House, representing the views and guarding the fortunes of a great people, was the last utterance that fell upon his ear from the great theater on which his own high reputation had been achieved, and from which he had so recently withdrawn never to return. Who shall say how soothing and consoling this message was to our departed friend in that final vicissitude of life! As it fell from the lips of his distinguished associate and friend, the gentleman from New York, [Mr. COX,] who shall say how it buoyed up his drooping spirits! The sympathy of a nation, mingling with the love of wife and child and friends, closing the one life even while the new opened with glimpses of the infinite and the immortal!

We had scarcely reached our homes when the announcement came, MICHAEL C. KERR is dead, and the heart of a great people uttered a sigh of regret. MICHAEL C. KERR had scarcely reached the prime of his manhood; he had been in public life for a comparatively brief period; and yet his natural abilities and attainments and the struggles of an honorable ambition had placed him in the foremost rank of the citizens of the Republic, while his just conceptions of public duty, his singleness of purpose to promote the general welfare in the employment of political power, and, above all, the severe and impartial integrity of his judgment in public affairs, had secured to him respect and confidence of a great people. Surely his was a fortunate life; fortunate for his country, of high honor for himself.

Mr. KERR, with more than ordinary attainments in the general field of intellectual culture, had devoted his most valuable and maturer years to the learning connected with his public duties. His chief study was the science of government, the laws of political economy, and the principles of the social fabric of life in its relations to the

Digitized by Google

state. He was not an enthusiast, but a severe and impartial seeker after truth. He was in no sense a Utopian. His opinions were based on precedents and the teachings of history, and he questioned with impartial purpose the institutions of government which have perished as well as those which have survived, for the just principles of political society and the true relations of the citizen to the state. His opinions were convictions, and he stood by them with unflinching courage. His temper was neither compromising nor conciliatory; he sought to convince, not to persuade, and shrank from no contest where his principles were involved. He had carefully studied the early history of the Republic, and was thoroughly imbued with the spirit and the opinions of its founders. He esteemed the vigorous maintenance of constitutional limitations on delegated power the most perfect safeguard of public liberty that human intelligence could devise. His theories of the social compact limited the domain of government to the maintenance of public order and the administration of justice, leaving all else to the untrammeled enterprise of the citizen and the moral power that springs from self-reliance, enlightened conscience, and cultivated intelligence of the people.

He was a true American, and gloried in the commanding influence of his country among the nations; and following the result of his deductions as to the just principles of government, as an outgrowth of the implied social compact, he believed in the fraternity of the nations, "that the world of mankind should not be considered in fragments, but that all peoples were reciprocally dependent;" hence he insisted that the intercourse of the nations should be untrammeled, that true statesmanship would bring the cultivated world together, and that commerce should be free.

As a legislator Mr. KERR accepted the maxim "the world is governed too much." He abhorred special and class legislation and every form of monopoly, demanding the just equality of all the citizens of the state. He held that a plain, simple government, with severe

Digitized by Google

limitations on delegated powers, frugally administered, was the noblest outgrowth of the cultivated intelligence of our age.

While neither impulsive nor an enthusiast, but cool, dispassionate, and logical in his mental organization, he was most earnest and devoted in his friendships, but asked nor gave quarter in conflicts of opinion. He was frank, ingenuous, and incapable of deception, a lover of truth and justice, controlled by a high sense of duty, even if time shall here and there demonstrate, as it reasonably may, the fallibility of his judgments, (and what perfection in judgment or attainments in statesmanship can escape this?) the records of Congress will for all coming time bear testimony with what unswerving fidelity, in the light of his conscientious convictions, he fulfilled his high trust as a representative of the people. He followed his principles without fear or hesitation to their logical results as a Representative on this floor. No fear of the consequences to himself deterred him. He yielded without reserve to the mastery of his convictions, and trusted to time and events to vindicate the integrity of his opinions.

Mr. KERR was not in the ordinary sense of the term an orator. He never seemed to speak with a view to rhetorical effect. He seldom if ever appealed to the passions or prejudices of his hearers; yet he was the master of a very high order of eloquence. He had a complete mastery of the English language. His style of composition was elevated and elegant, compact, clear, and logical; his delivery at times fervid or impassioned, and always clear, distinct, and powerful. In the current debates on this floor his distinct, concise, positive, and logical method of reasoning never failed to arrest the attention of the House.

Mr. KERR was not only an intellectual man, but his will was absolutely the master—a mastery that only death itself could subdue. After his election as Speaker of this House, surrounded by embarrassment in arranging the details of organization, prostrated by a fatal malady, feeble and suffering, he applied himself to the task with

Digitized by Google

unfaltering purpose. When he left this Hall never to return, with the hand of death upon him, the fortitude of his mind was unshaken. The fresh breezes of the mountains did not arrest the decay of nature, and with the fortitude of a Christian and the composure of a sage, assured of an honorable remembrance by his country, he met the inevitable fate—

> Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
> About him and lies down to pleasant dreams.

MICHAEL C. KERR is dead. The record of a good life is complete. May that record perpetuate his virtues and the services he has rendered to his country as long as time shall endure.

ADDRESS OF MR. BURCHARD, OF ILLINOIS.

Mr. SPEAKER: Although Death with busy hand has repeatedly snatched Senators and Representatives from the post of duty, never before has he stalked boldly into this Hall and taken away a Speaker of the House—its presiding officer and head.

During this Congress the grim tyrant has unmistakenly displayed his resistless power and remorseless will. When the Representatives assembled one year ago, at the commencement of the first regular session, the Capitol was draped in mourning. Henry Wilson, Vice-President of the United States, had been stricken and numbered with the dead. His mortal remains, with national honors, as became the office and the man, had been borne to their last resting-place in the bosom of the commonwealth he so warmly loved and so long represented.

Again assembled, the somber emblems of sorrow that surround the vacant Speaker's seat and front the waiting Representatives anticipate the official announcement that MICHAEL C. KERR, the Speaker of the House, for the last time has presided over its deliberations. To-day we banish the excitement of legislative debate and withdraw

Digitized by Google

our thoughts from the great events and grave and momentous questions of the hour, to bestow the accustomed and merited honors and pay a grateful tribute to the memory of a friend and associate, a Representative of the people, and a presiding officer of the House.

Rightly to estimate the public character and services of MICHAEL C. KERR, it must be considered in connection with the times in which he lived and the great questions in which he took a part.

Mr. KERR entered congressional life in the closing scenes of a historic drama, played by real and living characters in successive acts, which opened with legislative discussion, culminated in bloody strife, and ended in the establishment of universal liberty and political equality throughout the nation. For nearly a century slavery, the evil genius of American institutions, presaged disaster and endangered the perpetuity of the Union. Its overthrow and utter annihilation was the grand historic event in the first century of the Republic. Its constitutional prohibition had already been secured (and the last of the confederate forces had surrendered) when in December, 1865, Mr. KERR became a member of the Thirty-ninth Congress as Representative from the State of Indiana. He, with the other statesmen of that Congress, was brought at once to consider what plan was safest and wisest for the restoration of the seceding States to their practical relations to the Union. Great constitutional and legal questions were involved.

His mind, trained to habits of logical reasoning and judicial investigation, subjected every measure to the closest scrutiny. He did not shrink from encountering in debate upon these subjects the oldest and most experienced members of the House. By apt citation of precedent or authority in support of his views, he at once took rank as an able debater and diligent student of constitutional law.

A strict constructionist in interpreting the grants of Federal power, he sharply criticised and earnestly opposed the policy and measures then adopted as the basis of reconstruction in the seceding States.

Digitized by Google

We are perhaps too near and many of us have been too prominent actors to be able to pass unbiased judgment upon the results achieved or failures that may have ensued. If fears have not been realized, and evils predicted and objections urged have proved illusory, we cannot say that an opposition which secures more deliberate consideration and seeks to point out supposed defects and injurious consequences is profitless.

My personal acquaintance with Mr. KERR commenced in the Forty-first Congress, and by assignment to the same committee-duty in the Forty-second Congress our personal association became frequent and intimate. In the daily discussions of great public interests and economic questions, for months under consideration in that Congress, no one who heard Mr. KERR in committee or on the floor will deny him honesty of purpose, fearlessness in the avowal of his convictions, and ability in presenting and explaining his conclusions. He rose above personal considerations. Friendship could not allure him to support a measure he disapproved. He despised all shams and pretenses. He was a stranger to deceit. He gave no comforting assurances to a claimant with a hopeless case. Special legislation was his aversion. He hated monopolies and congressional favoritism. His bold and manly course in avowing and advocating a financial policy at variance with the supposed current of popular opinion in his own State challenged the admiration and won the respect of even political opponents, as well as the thoughtful men of the country. It doubtless made him Speaker of this House. In that high position he did not disappoint the expectations of friends or the country.

In his rulings and decisions all acknowledged that he aimed to be, as a worthy Speaker should, impartial, just, fair, and absolutely right. He presided with dignity, observing as well as exacting the courtesy due to members and to the Chair.

Such was the record and impression made by the late Speaker ere

Digitized by Google

declining strength compelled him to designate other occupants, and finally leave the chair in order to seek restoration of failing health away from the exciting scenes of congressional life.

The hopes and prayers of a devoted wife and loving son, the ministrations of watchful friends, were vain and futile. Amid the then incipient excitement and rising storm of political discussion and partisan passion incident to a presidential campaign, his peaceful spirit deserted its earthly tenement and was wafted to its eternal rest.

Thus the all-conqueror, again exulting, reminds us of his resistless power. The law-maker is not beyond his mandate. The mighty and the lowly are alike subject to his will. But death triumphs only over man's mortal frame. Its material elements dissolve and commingle with their mother earth. Dust returns to dust. But this is the limit to death's power.

The man, his character and achievements still survive in memory, in influence, and far-reaching results.

Great deeds, grand, heroic words, and thoughts beautiful or sublime strike responsive chords and are re-echoed and reproduced in other sympathetic souls. They live and inspire, mold, guide, and sway present and future generations.

The manly form of MICHAEL C. KERR will never again enter this Hall. He rests from his labors and conflicts. Triumphs and honors cannot allure him to earthly scenes.

His mortal remains are moldering in the dust, but his lofty character, his example, and influence will live and remind us that manly sincerity, integrity, and honesty of purpose ennoble and exalt the possessor more than high position and earthly honors.

ADDRESS OF MR. COX, OF NEW YORK.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Representatives of thirty-seven independent States this day pause in their deliberations for the welfare of forty-

Digitized by Google

five millions of people to offer to the memory of a great and good man the solemn anguish of a nation for its loss, and their sympathy with a family and constituency in their bereavement.

The lapse of time which heals up the green and bleeding wounds of sorrow, and which makes too often ceremonies like this the mere mockery of woe, has had no balm save that which preserves the recollection of our friend, no dew of refreshing save the sweet dew of his memory.

It is eminently fitting that this House should place upon the tomb of its late presiding officer, and the third officer of the Government, a civic crown!

The catalogue of American representatives is a catalogue of mortality. Our political system has in it much of popular caprice, and more of providential vicissitude. Of those that were here when I first entered this Hall but four or five remain. As I look about this Hall I perceive one and only one of my Ohio colleagues [Mr. W. S. GROESBECK] who was a member of the Thirty-fifth Congress; and he will share my thought and feeling. The first death which we were called upon to mourn was that of a beloved southern statesman and soldier, John A. Quitman. Subsequently and how frequently have others fallen!

I feel almost isolated, standing between the many dead, who were friends, and the living who in a few years will be numbered with the dead; but in all these chances and changes of time it has been my lot to cheer and not to sadden. In the home and among kindred for two generations it was not for me to weep, but to dry the tear of others. When the great moan went up that Douglas was indeed dead, and in that solemn hour for the country I came forth to the stricken men who surrounded my Ohio home to hear the last telegraph—not to mourn but to comfort them with hope. In the dark hour when the country was filled with battle-cries and blood, I lifted on high not the wail of Jeremiah, but the joy of Isaiah, in the hope

Digitized by Google

that soon the waste places would be built up and the old leaf and bloom return with the spring. I tried to bring good tidings, to bind up the broken-hearted; and to them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

On another and recent occasion, and as the shadows gathered over the Rockbridge Mountains, it was my place to give what of comfort I could, by fringing the cloud with golden hope to the stricken. But on this occasion it is my privilege and my infinite relief to mourn as one who has not merely lost a friend, but as a citizen who has lost a compatriot, and, as a Representative, to deplore a brother who in this dire trial of our institutions is not with us to guide.

It may not be out of place here to say that, in spite of marked contrasts of character, I shared with Mr. KERR many of the burdens, studies, and sympathies of life. It was a sad pleasure to stand with him at the last, on the shore of that vast ocean which he knew that he must sail so soon. Racked with more than mortal anguish in his last sickness; harassed with a false accusation which touched the very heart and marrow of his character; his body shrinking and shrinking to the very imagery of death the skeleton; yet his spirit was as calm as a still, sweet morning, as it rises above yonder azure mountains where he died, and his will as firm as their rocky base. Unappalled by the terrors of the unknown world, he passed away out of the beautiful valley where he sojourned into the valley of the shadow. Naught remained but the mere phantom of a body. This was borne to his home in Indiana. The theme over his remains was well chosen: "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold." Until the last flower faded from the earth around his home, loving crowds thronged to the cemetery, and every Sabbath his friends and constituents made their pilgrimages to lay, with their sympathy, immortelles upon his grave.

He died at the Alum Springs, West Virginia. It is an old resort, an

Digitized by Google

intervale of beauty, a charming little park sweetly embosomed in the Blue Ridge; a lonely spot, with now and then a habitation, but with a bracing air, a splendid forest, and grand mountains. There is a primeval quietude there, almost a summer-afternoon feeling, as if the lotus-eaters of Tennyson had made it a resort aloof from the cries of people that do come and go. The only noise is that of murmuring waters. It was amid these solemn silences that his last weeks and hours were passed. It was amid those remote and pleasant nooks of nature that God unloosed his weary star. His was no sudden call. All preparations, secular and spiritual, possible were made by his own direction. The silver cord was not cut hurriedly, nor the golden bowl broken in an instant. No holocaust of fire snapped his life's cord suddenly. The cord was gently untied; the golden bowl melted away as if it were a scarf of vapory amethyst, or rather as the light fades away from the firmament at the coming on of evening mild. Just as the sun went down, his spirit peacefully departed. The pearl dropped from its wasted shell as the sun passed behind the mountain. There he lay in the lap of a lovelier nature, by stiller streams and fairer meadows than we are wont to fancy in some blest Arcady; but when death came it seemed to make the beauty of the mountains seem as barren as the desert; the flowers and leafage and rocks and hills lost their charm, the breeze its freshness, the song of birds its music, and the sweet shine of the sun was all joyless.

> But in the mountains did he feel his faith.
> All things responsive to the writing there
> Breathed immortality, revolving life,
> And greatness still revolving—infinite.
> There littleness was not; the least of things
> Seemed infinite.

What was that faith? I could not speak truly and say it was the accepted dogmas of any church. He could no more be a mystygogue than a demagogue. If he could not accept all that was written about

Digitized by Google

the Savior, he fully sanctioned and truly lived up to the code of morals which Christ gave. He believed an honest man to be the best Christian. His plan of life was to get all the knowledge he could, and use it in doing all the good he could.

Though his life may have seemed to some reserved, yet his austerity was but the visor which concealed generosity, tenderness, and trustfulness. He sympathized with all men, and only repelled those who were exacting and dishonest. His faith was in honest work; it was this that made his home a sacred spot, refined and beautiful, ennobled by delightful intimacies and old-fashioned hospitality. It is not a new standard by which he regulated his life. *Laborare est orare* is as old as the fathers of the church. That he made integrity his religion, work his orizon, and truth his idolatry, is only repeating the written words of the wise and good of all ages. He wrought

> With human hands, the creed of creeds
> In loveliness of perfect deeds.

To be kind to the widow and fatherless was one of his canons; and this man never in his profession would receive a reward for serving them! To be faithful to his public trust; and this man no more flinched from uttering unpopular than worthy thoughts. Pericles in his last illness said: "No Athenian in consequence of any action of mine had ever put on mourning." Mr. KERR could truthfully say the same in a better sense.

When I went at his request to Virginia and to his bedside, and after delivering the messages from his friends here, I asked him if he were ready to meet the unseen world; with a glance of gentleness, and a pressure of my hand, he declared that he was ready. We talked of the mysterious realm. His faith was abiding that in that future there was reward for a just life here. As he said, half playfully, he stood upon his record.

It was this pious probity which he impressed upon his people, upon Congress, upon his own life, and upon his son. It had its source in the

Digitized by Google

heart as well as the head. This is especially observable in the care which he gave to his son's tuition, even to the last hours of his life. He seldom left his house on his return from his office. As has been so well said by his colleague, [Mr. HAMILTON,] who offered these resolutions, he scarcely mingled with the masses of the people, even his own constituents, but with kind cheerfulness was wont to retire to his home and library. There he studied his favorite authors, examined his son in the studies of the day, and filled up each hour with some useful thought or exercise. The speech of Plato to the Athenians he expressed in his life: "For the glory of parents is an excellent and an honorable treasure to their children, making up for the lack of possessions and dignities." "*Dos est magna parentium virtus.*" (Hor. Od., xxiv, lib. 3.) May I not read from the Chicago Times the record of his last advice to his son to illustrate the paternal care and gentle worth of this our best representative man?

A few days before his death, Mr. KERR had a conversation with his son, in the course of which he said: "I have nothing to leave you, my son, except my good name. Guard it and your mother's honor, and live as I have lived." He further said: "Pay all my debts, if my estate will warrant it without leaving your mother penniless. Otherwise pay what you can, and then go to my creditors and tell them the truth, and pledge your honor to wipe out the indebtedness."

The source of this man's power was not altogether intellectual; it was in the affections. What a void has been made in his western home!

Who can tell the anguish of the bereaved! Even the delights of the old home in the West intensified it. "She was at home," writes the bereaved son of the widowed mother, "among friends; but she could not feel at home, for *he* was not there. Everything suggested father to her. Something would requicken her sorrow. The finding of an old letter, the half-read book with the mark of leaving off, and all those thousand ever-recurring, inconsiderable reminders that keep the heart of sorrow painfully darkened by the shadow of him who has gone; these things lengthened out and intensified the grief till the

Digitized by Google

burden became too hard to bear." For such human agony there is no compensation in the honors and preferments of our life. The current of domestic bliss which once flowed so calmly, reflecting the very heavens on its mirrored bosom, when thus overshadowed—where is the adequate return in the plaudits and honors of men? To wait and wish, and to hear no step, no voice of husband and father; the olden aid, which directed, supported, and comforted, gone; gone; no advent to glorify the gloom—this is to the overworn and wearied watcher what mere mechanism of tongue or pen cannot express. Expression only benumbs the soul of such griefs as these. Our tears freeze at the fountain, our sympathies die in the attempt to express them.

History and oratory have been spent in haranguing about the heroes of war. Military genius and renown have been themes of encomium to quicken patriotism and endear private virtues. In the funeral orations over the dead Greeks who fell in fight, Mars alone received apotheosis. We have orations by Pericles, Lysias, and Plato preserved in the crystal beauty of Thucydides. All the muses and graces do obeisance to the solemn rapture of the eloquent hour when in graceful periods and imperishable language the orator came forth from the monument, ascended the tribunal, and, with panegyric beyond the reach of modern art, displayed the virtues of the dead. But these eulogies were in praise only of martial glory. Only once do I recall the words of an inspired Greek, forgetting for a moment the custom of the time, admonishing the people "that the whole earth was the sepulcher of renowned men," whether renowned for honorable exertion in war or peace. It is the old vaunting story of the Bible even: "Saul has slain his thousands, but David his tens of thousands." The helmet, the plume, the spear, the sword, the onset—these are the themes of classic funeral eloquence. Men are prone to forget what has been done by the gifted and great whose associations were those of art, literature, benevolence, and science. We

Digitized by Google

seldom remember long those whose lives were rounded with the humility of good deeds and gentle affections. Men rear monuments and arches to the captains of armies, rarely to the leaders of opinion. Few mounds of green turf remain to recall the great thoughts which lived in the heroic lives of such men as Plato, Newton, Saint Xavier, Howard, or Cobden. Monuments to military men overshadow these little hillocks on whose breast tears fall and over whose dust blossoms cluster. Rome has her arch to Titus, her column of Trajan. The grave of Agamemnon has been found and glorified by a German scholar; and the exhumed Atridæ are more honored by emperors and kings than the blind bard who sung their praises along the Agean.

But, thanks to a better civilization, even the successful general to-day must have something more than the brute instinct which led Pelissier to smoke the Kabyles in their caves. He must have more than the engineering skill of Todleben and Von Moltke. He must have that knowledge of human nature by which to rule men, not merely in the ranks, but in the senate, in the forum, and among the masses. He must be, as was said of Wellington, something more than a commissary or clerk. He must minister to peaceful states; he must think like lightning, and strike with its vehemence and fatality for tranquil homes and human happiness in great crises; he must have the gentle amenities of culture along with the heart of the hero. Above all, he must have inwoven like threads of light the patriotic devotion which sees in his country's flag a symbol of order and unity and in his country's civil glory his highest hope and inspiration. The legends and songs, flags and heraldry, with their beasts and boastings, show through all time that prowess in the encounter of body with body is the barbaric yet universal code of honor. But when the sword of patriotism is jeweled in the hilt with civil virtues, then a Washington rescues the mere wager by battle from its irrational fame, and gives added glory to the gem and new splendors to the magisterial sword!

Digitized by Google

May something, sir, be pardoned to the spirit of eulogy, when I say that these elements of true grandeur found a rare combination in MICHAEL C. KERR.

Patient in study, gentle yet firm in his feelings and determinations, inspired with the courage of true patriotism, defying, as he did, the mob with the same energy with which he analyzed a tariff or denounced an exacting monopoly—arranging, classifying, assimilating details for practical service, making his conscience his religion—he stands, more than most of the men who have taken part in our councils since the war, as an exemplar of intelligent and fearless, pure and gentle patriotic duty. Yet he was not all judgment, else he would not have been a patriot; he was not all passion, else he would not have been a statesman. In debate, as in private talk, he had at times great vehemence of manner and great intrepidity in action. He did not toss his thoughts about easily; he was at times timid in their utterance till thoroughly assured by patiently marshaling them, and then he was eloquent. Spurning traditions and legends, believing in no law not revocable; not anxious to force men to do what he thought was best for them; with a noble rage at wrong and a disgust of parasites, he would add no largess to bad gains and greeds. What were the meshes of old custom to his fresh, inquiring mind? While he never turned away from a new truth, while he had no respect for mere antiquity, while he would clear away the lush growth over our select shrines of duty, he revered the ancient ways of the Constitution and all its muniments with the ardor of a neophyte Sensitive to every point of honor, he was not less careful of his own fame when assailed by perjury than of the financial and patriotic honor of his country.

But, sir, while the contemplation of his character is no compensation for his loss, it is not less instructive than proper for us to know the sources of that magic which won the support of his constituency and the preferments of this Congress. The secret of this talismanic

Digitized by Google

power lay in the discipline of his mind. He was an example, by no means uncommon in this country, of one who was strengthened by wrestling with adversity. The first half of his life was a struggle with poverty, the last with disease. Rising above the trammels of early life, he thought more of brain than of brawn. Desiring a larger range of usefulness and ambitious of thorough education, he struggled out of difficulty into a profession where his naturally keen analytic mind had full play. He was not only a good lawyer and advocate, but his mind had a judicial cast, which he would no doubt have illustrated in the chair had he lived, and for which rare trait he was selected as the reporter to the supreme court of Indiana. He believed in settled principles of authority, binding as firmly as the pagan gods were bound by the decree of fate. But while he loved law, he loved liberty. As a Massachusetts scholar has said, "He loved them together," and because, like the nitrogen and oxygen of the atmosphere, they give vitality when combined in proper proportions.

To my mind he does not rate so highly as the lawyer, only because he was more of the scholar and the statesman. His pre-eminence in the last character came from his constant preparation in the first. Every speech of his was a study, a treatise. When he spoke on matters connected with the laws of wealth, trade, and currency, his lucid and cogent style was not more remarkable than his abundant information.

How was this preparation made? He seldom read works of fiction or frivolity. The weightier and more solid authors were to his taste and preference. He never read but one or two novels, and those in the last of his life. George Eliot's Adam Bede attracted him because it endeavored to solve problems of social science. He seldom read poetry, save Homer's Iliad and Milton; though Shakespeare was always near him, and the Bible frequently consulted. In this respect he was not unlike Tristem Burgess, the orator, of Rhode Island. He never intertangled the roses of poetry with the bearded

Digitized by Google

grain of his philosophy. Still he was a great reader of books. His first act when he came to his home from the office was to take up an unfinished book. He left a library of twenty-five hundred volumes, each bought one by one, read, marked, and digested. His library is full of standard works on political economy, to which he always added more, almost until the day of his death.

For a man apparently so uncongenial and cold, the liberalities of his culture, taste, and logic are remarkable. He excluded no volume, however heterodox or orthodox, from his library or his mind. Jefferson was his ideal of a statesman and Webster of an orator. Pictures of both hang in his library. His scrap-book was kept for the "best thoughts" of the fathers, as he called them. No ethical or partisan bias controlled his reason. You will see in his library Rénan's Life of Jesus huddling close to McCosh's Evidences of Christianity; Tyndall shakes hands with Paley; Draper's Religion and Science stands by Buckle's History of Civilization; Barnes's Notes keep company with Tom Paine; Jefferson and Madison are almost imbound with Hamilton and Jay; Henry C. Carey lies between Wayland and John Stuart Mill to bridge the abyss between free trade and protection. Friends and enemies were alike welcome to his mind, and he tested them all in the crucible of his reason.

Out of this abundant reading he was enabled, by his method, his regularity and discipline, to evoke general thoughts for practical life. By his masculine understanding, steady perseverance, and unwearied resolution he rose above illness, professional avocations, and the local demands of his constituency to a higher plane than most statesmen. This element of persistency belonged to his natural traits of character. It was illustrated during his life. It was illustrated in the chair, in the struggle with disease, to fill his duty. It was illustrated in the last hours of his tenacious life, for his reason remained unimpaired to the end.

I have said that his reason and conscience were his religion. It

Digitized by Google

was his habit to submit everything to this test. He squared his life with scrupulous reason. No temporal interest of his own or that of his family swerved him from following this guiding element of his character.

He was a scholar; he was a disciple of the positive philosophy, devoted to the tenets of Herbert Spencer, John Stuart Mill, Compte, and Buckle. His political science was drawn, as most political science is, from those of similar philosophic inclinations. Jeremy Bentham was his teacher, consciously or unconsciously. His ideas were not transcendental, but utilitarian. The bent of his mind was increased by his studies in this school of philosophy, but there was no unreasoning skepticism in his character.

Despite his unwillingness to believe in anything miraculous or improbable, his heart was reverential before the great Omniscience. With him reason was the first born, and, though twin with faith, both inherited the blessing. If he had any bias in his mind it was toward reason, though his faith walked timidly hand in hand with it. It is said that the sun is reason, while faith is the lesser orb that shines by night. MICHAEL C. KERR made the great light to rule his busy day. How far the lesser ruled in the contemplations of the night only God knows. If faith shines only so long as she reflects some faint illumination from the brighter orb, what casuistry shall discard this man's religious nature from the shrine of a true religion?

It is not necessary to renew the scenes of his death-bed here and now. Only this may be said, from competent medical authority, that rarely has one of our race been gifted with such a tenacity of life. He lived after his pulse ceased to beat. This fact may serve somewhat to account for the positiveness of his purposes in life and the positive philosophy to which his intellect inclined.

He was a democrat on principles fixed by his studies and philosophy, I was about to say, by his religion. Yet (as has been truly said) he was averse to the rough encounters of the hustings. It was

Digitized by Google

difficult to induce him to speak outside of his neighborhood. Once in New York he promised to talk for five minutes to my friends, but when on his feet, and with an audience sympathizing with his free-trade ideas, he held the audience for two hours in one great plea for his favorite liberalities of commerce and against the mercenary inequalities of protection. These were his favorite themes to illustrate his general political ideas. They were to him an enthusiastic sentiment—his principle of action. He traveled abroad to study them. He came to Congress to give them vigor and effect.

He was averse to the crowd. When writing to him about my *pro tempore* visit to the great exposition, he expressed his regret that he did not see the grand engine and its wonderful ramifications of harnessed forces; but at the same time he said that he shrank from such throngs like the sensitive plant before the human touch. Yet his political thoughts were ever "broad, based upon the people's will." His dissection of the questions growing out of reconstruction and the southern ballot, which had been to him a special study, shows the ultimate scorn of a mind utterly hating fraud and the lofty patriot who reverenced all sections and respected all rights. It is said that the spectroscope reveals that there is a star which burns gold for its illumination. By a wonderful coincidence it is the distant star Aldebaran, far off in the group of Hyades, which the Rosicrucians, who sought to transmute all metals into gold, worshiped. That star was their fateful genius for inspiration and alchemy. Not less precious to him than if it were a star of gold was each State, distinct in individuality and like to each other in a common right, interest, and destiny, whether shining near or afar!

O, that God would raise up for our instruction and guidance other men of the same exalted type of American manhood—men as just, other haters of corruption as earnest, other tribunes of the people as peerless and fearless, and other statesmen as lofty and pure in patriotic devotion! When, sir, I perceive the emblem of mourning over

Digitized by Google

the seat he so lately occupied, shrouding our ensign, the omen is sadly portentous and painfully suggestive. Were he with us in this hour of our solicitude, I know, sir, that he would not fail with courageous counsel. He would revive the heroism of that parliamentary band, before which royal prerogatives cowered, when before the privilege of the Commons and its stanch Speakers the bills of right of a free people were made paramount to the thunders of the throne!

His fame was not quenched by death—only his opportunity. It was said by Theodore Parker of Samuel Adams that he was not in one sense a Christian man, but one of Plutarch's men. So was MICHAEL C. KERR. His human worth can only be reckoned by the gravity of his loss to us in this perilous and anxious trial for the stability and genius of the Government. If liberty through his death has lost from this hall of the people one of her purest devotees; if liberty, like Algernon Sydney, must go to the scaffold, yet from the scaffold she will ascend to another sphere where there is a better code of justice and right; and there in that realm, who will give her less stinted welcome than the immortal spirit of MICHAEL C. KERR!

Under such patriotic thoughts as were his, still surviving death, our country may cease from its passionate discord. Then peace will bind our States as sheaves are bound in the harvesting, season after season, till the latest generation. You, Mr. Speaker, and ye who are your brothers in these exalted trusts, ye who have the keeping of this bruised and broken land, can ye not all rise under the admonition of such a life as our late Speaker lived into a higher sense of duty and a more self-sacrificing patriotism? Can we not encompass our beloved land around with a wall of fire that will not burn, but guard? Shall we not do this before its grave yawns; that grave where there is no work, nor knowledge, nor device, nor wisdom? Thus faithful unto death in our trusts, as he was, may we not have the promise of a crown of everlasting life, which I trust in God he wears?

Digitized by Google

ADDRESS OF MR. CLYMER, OF PENNSYLVANIA.

Mr. SPEAKER: This Congress, from the hour of its meeting in December, 1875, until the day of its adjournment in August, 1876, stood in the shadow of an impending calamity! A Speaker was elected who, by reason of his long service, his large experience, and pre-eminent ability, was deemed worthy of the exalted station. He brought to the discharge of its duties a clear head, a sound heart, an impartial judgment, and a resolute will; but, sir, it was painfully evident to every one that a mortal and fast-consuming malady had possession of him. In the very hour of his triumph, when he had scaled the heights and reached the goal of his ambition; when there lay before bright prospects of future usefulness and still higher honor; when he had a right to feel that he was about to enjoy the full fruition of a laborious and well-spent life, he was summoned to the dread conflict with the last enemy, one in which we must all engage, and in which no mortal may triumph. For days and weeks and months we stood sad and helpless spectators of the fierce struggle. We well knew it to be hopeless, and our sorrow was scarcely lessened by our admiration for the heroic courage, the sublime fortitude, the dauntless spirit with which he marched forth to meet and embrace death.

Mr. Speaker, it was not my good fortune, as it was yours and that of others who hear me, to have served with him in former days, when he stood upon this floor the peer of any one in intellect and ability; and therefore I leave it to those who have personal knowledge to speak of his merits and services as a legislator and statesman. My personal acquaintance with him began with the first session of this Congress. Under ordinary circumstances it would necessarily have been slight, but painful events, fresh in the recollection of all of us

Digitized by Google

and of the whole country, placed me in such relations to him as to render it almost a duty, as it is a mournful satisfaction, to put on record my estimate of his character as a man.

After years of public service, here and elsewhere, he stood at the threshold of the grave, comparatively poor in this world's goods, and, to his great honor be it spoken, rich in nothing save his good name, his character for spotless integrity, his unblemished reputation for purity in public and private life. These were his jewels; these were the treasures which he had garnered; these he valued more than houses and lands or all mere earthly possessions. But, sir, when weak and worn by disease, when even hope had fled, when the dark shadows of death were closing about him, a base and cowardly attempt was made to rob him of his good name and send him to his grave disgraced and dishonored. It became my painful duty to inform him of the nature of the charge preferred against him. He met it with a philosophic composure and stern defiance which told of his conscious innocence. Courting the most searching investigation, he demanded to meet his base accuser face to face. For long and weary days the investigation proceeded. I will not attempt to describe the proud and defiant spirit with which he met and braved the terrible ordeal. So broken and disabled in body, those who knew him best had grave fears that death would seal his lips before he could make reply; but the very exigency seemed to rekindle and vivify his expiring energies, to endow him with new and almost superhuman power. To him it was a struggle more grave and terrible than that which he had been making for prolonged existence: it was for untarnished reputation, for unsullied honor. To the dying man these were dearer and far more precious than mere existence, for without them it would have been a curse. The hour of his triumphant vindication came, when in this chamber each Representative of the American people then present rose solemnly in his place and declared his profound conviction of his purity and innocence. Thus the dark cloud which threat-

Digitized by Google

ened to obscure the brightness of his setting sun was rolled away, and a blessed peace, a serene tranquillity came to the great heart of the dying Speaker.

I may not lift the vail which rightfully separates his inner and private from his outer and public life, but it would be unjust to his memory did I fail to record his lively sense of this crowning act of kindness and justice on the part of those whose good opinion was so dear to him. To his sensitive and dying ear it told of the verdict which after times would render. It brought profound consolation to him, and thereafter he was fully prepared to say "*Hinc dimittis.*"

His was a proud, sensitive, and imperious nature, even shrinking from familiarity with the world, asking little of its sympathy, and caring less for its applause. He chose to be judged by his acts rather than by professions. His convictions were deep and decided upon all questions, and he did not hesitate to obey and follow them to their ultimate and logical results. He controlled and led his fellow-men by the sheer force of his intellect rather than by the influence of his heart. He was always a teacher, a leader; never an imitator or servile follower. In any era of our history he would have been a character of mark, his moral courage and his mental powers alike fitting him for the performance of duties of gravest moment. His death would have been a great public loss at any time; in this hour of doubt, uncertainty, and danger it is next to irreparable, when we consider the character of the man, the dignity and power of his place, the hold he had upon the confidence of the people, and the stern and unyielding fidelity with which he would have dared to perform his whole duty.

To-day, Indiana stands chief mourner for the son of her adoption, MICHAEL C. KERR; close and next by her side stands Pennsylvania, on whose soil he was born and partly reared. She claims a sister's sacred right to mourn the loss of an honored child. My poor and broken utterances but feebly express her estimate of his worth, her profound regard for his memory.

Digitized by Google

Address of Mr. McCrary, of Iowa.

Mr. Speaker: I esteem it a privilege as well as a duty to offer on this occasion my humble tribute to the memory of our late lamented Speaker. I do so not as a mere empty ceremony, but prompted by a profound respect for the great qualities of mind and heart which adorned his life, which sustained him in sickness and in death, and the memory of which will live long in the history of his country and in the hearts of his countrymen. I desire to speak a few words in remembrance of his virtues in this place, which was the scene of so much of his public career, and on this day, which our records are to dedicate sacredly to his memory, because I knew him well and esteemed and honored him in life, while I deeply and earnestly lament his death. My personal acquaintance with Mr. Kerr began in the Forty-first Congress, in which we served together on the Committee of Elections, and although it never ripened into confidential intimacy, it was of that kind which enabled me, as I think, to form a just estimate of his character. His active participation in the proceedings of Congress, his prominent position among the leaders of his party, his fearless, bold, and outspoken action upon all public questions, brought him prominently before the House and the country, and his associates upon this floor, whether personally intimate with him or not, could not fail to know him as a Representative, to appreciate him as a man, and to realize his great power. He was a man of commanding ability. Toward the close of his life his powers were of course in some degree impaired by disease; and yet we all know how remarkably clear and vigorous were all his rulings as Speaker as well as his statement of the ground upon which he placed them. When in the full vigor of health he was seldom matched, and I think never overmatched, in debate upon this floor. He was a careful student and thinker, and though he spoke frequently, it was never at ran-

Digitized by Google

dom, but he always uttered what had been carefully matured and settled in his own mind. He was a profound lawyer, and in his own State as well as elsewhere he stood very high in the ranks of his profession. He was a man of intense convictions, and always uttered what he thoroughly believed to be true and defended what he thoroughly believed to be right, while his denunciation of what he deemed false and wrong was always earnest and vigorous. To these rare qualities he added thorough honesty and the utmost purity of life in all its relations, whether public or private. I may not from personal knowledge speak of the beauty and sweetness of his home-life and of his purely private and domestic relations, but these have been since his death, as they were in his life, the theme upon which those who were very near to him have most loved to dwell.

It is praise, indeed, to say of one departed, "He was a good husband, a good father, and a good citizen," and when we may add, "He was a true patriot, an able and faithful public servant, and a wise and sagacious statesman," the eulogy is complete. As a presiding officer our late Speaker was a model of dignity, urbanity, and impartiality. His course while in the chair was such as not only to command the respect but also to win the esteem and confidence of his political opponents, as well as his party associates. I take this occasion to bear willing and emphatic testimony to this fact. I refer to it with great pleasure, because in it I find an illustration of that devotion to duty and faithfulness to public trust which distinguished him, and which must characterize the life of every really great man. Here is to be found one of the surest tests by which to discover a really lofty character. When such a character is called to a position where he is to decide questions arising between his fellow-men, he is sure to rise above every consideration except those which concern justice and the law. Mr. KERR was an active participant in many exciting partisan contests upon this floor during his service here, and few men ever defended in debate their party or its principles with greater zeal

Digitized by Google

and ability; but as Speaker he seemed to know no party. He took his great office with a firm resolve to administer it with perfect fidelity, to be absolutely faithful and just, and he kept that purpose to the end.

I speak thus of the deceased Speaker with all the more pleasure because, while we were personal friends, we were political opponents, and I feel that on that account my poor words of eulogy would be very grateful to him if he could hear them, and that they may be a source of consolation to the bereaved ones he has left behind. It is according to the genius of our institutions that political differences should never engender personal animosities. The right of private judgment and of free speech is a right so sacred, and belongs so sacredly to all, that we are bound to recognize it and respect it in our opponents if we would preserve it for ourselves. The great American principle of toleration lies at the foundation of our civil as well as our religious liberty; and that principle is obeyed in its true spirit only by those who have learned, not merely to tolerate an opponent, but to honor and respect an honest and manly adversary. Such an adversary was MICHAEL C. KERR; and as it was my pleasure while he lived upon all proper occasions to bear testimony to his exalted character, it is still my pleasure, now that he has passed on into that higher and better life, to speak in praise of his many virtues and in honor of his memory.

ADDRESS OF MR. ATKINS, OF TENNESSEE.

Mr. SPEAKER: At this stage of these memorial ceremonies I consult the emotions of my heart rather than the dictates of my judgment in attempting to speak on this mournful occasion.

The fame and popularity of the distinguished dead, in the State of Tennessee, makes it meet that some one of her representatives should pay a sincere tribute of respect to the memory of one who so largely commanded her admiration and esteem.

Digitized by Google

Truly Tennessee gives utterance of her sorrow and sympathy with Indiana, who keeps vestal watch over the honor of one of her favorite and most distinguished sons, and would remind her that she, too, yea, that a nation, claims the patrimony of his fame and in his death shares the spoliation and the loss.

This mute assemblage, these gloomy faces, these pendent trappings of national sorrow, bespeak a more than ordinary occasion of sadness. It is the heart-felt lamentation of the American people, through their representatives, over the loss of a wise statesman, a pure patriot, and an honest man; while it is a proper manifestation of the personal grief, mellowed a little by time, which pervades this entire Hall over this unusual if not altogether unprecedented bereavement, in the death of its presiding officer.

Already have we gazed with intense admiration upon the living portrait of this truly noble man, as it has been faithfully drawn today by his colleagues and peers. Starting with the first buddings of character in infancy, amid the sports and freaks of childhood, until ruder and stronger traits unfolded themselves, hardened by the iron touch of poverty, when at length he boldly entered the emulous walks of a self-reliant manhood; winning this trophy, bearing off that honor, gaining this triumph, all the time assuming responsibilities and enlarging the scope of his duties and deepening the foundations of his popularity by the most devoted consecration to the public interests, until finally he aspired to the exalted and distinguished office of Speaker of this House, and was fortunate enough to have the aspiration of his noble ambition crowned with brilliant success.

It is reserved, however, for the hand of affection to trace and gather up the incidents and events of his inward life and domestic feelings, which, inseparably interwoven, form the woof of his private history. These all will be laid away as golden treasures in memory's casket, which only is in the keeping of domestic love and filial devo-

Digitized by Google

tion, never again to meet with the world's harsh encounter. These tender associations let us leave inurned within the sacred chambers of inconsolable private grief; but of his outward life and public services we may speak, for they belong to the country and to society.

Nor can we fairly forecast his true character even as a public man without analyzing in some degree his elementary characteristics.

Indomitable energy and unflagging perseverance, linked with an earnestness born of deep and abiding conviction, marked all of his efforts, and enabled him almost invariably to succeed in whatever he undertook. With him action always followed conviction. Sprung from the ranks of the people, all of his sympathies and principles were in accord with them. He was truly a tribune of the people. Although devoted to party organization, he never surrendered or sacrificed to partisan advantage any real or substantive right which belonged alike to all. He was a partisan, but his partisanship was used as a means for the accomplishment of just public undertakings, and not as an end in the abstract. Watching his career as a public man, he impressed me as an honest inquirer after truth. He had a simple, child-like faith in its omnipotence, and wherever its clarion notes sounded, thitherward he bent his steps and there planted the standard of his unswerving fealty. Of course he could not be other than reliable, conscientious, and consistent. His character panoplied with these noble principles, it was not astonishing that public sentiment of all parties, recently, should have rushed to his rescue, to ward off the poisoned javelins of calumny and detraction, before even the courts of justice or a committee of Congress were enabled to pronounce the decree of his complete vindication. His mind turned with instinctive horror from every appearance of indirection, deceit, or dishonorable action, sustaining with true courage whatever he believed to be right, and opposing with his whole nature what he conceived to be wrong. Like Burke, he believed bad men capable

Digitized by Google

of doing any evil, however dark and wicked; hence he had no intimate associations or personal relations only as acquaintance and time developed the character and justified the friendship. As a consequence his personal friendships were limited, strong, unchangeable, and unsuspecting. Such a man was worthy of being the leader of the people as he was unquestionably their advocate and defender. He did not feel that his official duties, exalted, responsible, and honorable as they were, made him an irresponsible ruler or constituted in him any superiority to his constituency. He ever bowed with graceful and patriotic submission to the adverse will of the majority when constitutionally expressed. These attachments to popular rights and his unfeigned profession of political faith and doctrine created within his manly bosom the broadest and profoundest love of country.

No statesman knew better than he the true nature of our Government, the genius of our free institutions, our past history, foreign and domestic relations, and the real temper and interests of the people. No one knew better than he that the truest and most steadfast friends of liberty are a frugal, intelligent, and virtuous rural population. No one knew better than he from the pages of history that avarice, vice, and national vanity, when once allowed to obtain a hold upon the rulers of a nation, smother the love of country and drive out those simple, manly virtues in the people, by long accustoming them to acts of usurpation and doubtful authority, until they finally cease to care to what power they owe allegiance—by what they are governed. These dangerous and insidious inroads, gradually made upon the rights of the masses, and which so often have befallen free governments and caused their overthrow, ever caught the fire of his jealous eye and encountered in their incipiency the whole weight of his uncompromising opposition.

> And thou in this shalt find thy monument,
> When tyrant's crests and tombs of brass are spent.

Digitized by Google

Clothed with the delicate trust by party suffrage of exercising magisterial authority over the representatives of all the people, he never forgot that he best vindicated the honor and dignity of his high position by observing the utmost fairness in his rulings and maintaining toward all, without regard to partisan distinctions, perfect impartiality.

As the mother of the Gracchi, when asked for her jewels, pointed to her sons, so do a free constituency regard the representative whose private life presents a stainless escutcheon, while the mirror of his public record reflects only the images of truth, virtue, and patriotism.

While this matter-of-fact world excludes even the contemplation of the ideal and counts nothing worth save the practical and the true, yet where in all the land whose reputation of all of our public men for the last quarter of a century would furnish the artist a truer model or the poet a more perfect ideal of human virtue and worth than the moral and mental traits which made up the manly and noble character of MICHAEL C. KERR?

Alas! he has passed away, but his name is one of the household words of this Hall of Representatives, and will live with the truest and noblest who have worn its chief honors.

> To live with fame
> The gods allow to many, but to die
> With equal luster, is a blessing Heaven
> Selects from all her choicest boons of Fate,
> And with a sparing hand, on few bestows.

ADDRESS OF MR. HEREFORD, OF WEST VIRGINIA.

Mr. SPEAKER: If I had consulted my own wishes and inclinations I should have been silent during the present sad hour; but having been requested to join in the ceremonies of the occasion, with sad-

Digitized by Google

ness of heart and trembling hand I lay my wreath upon his bier, humble though it be.

I feel proud to be able to class myself as one of the earliest and warmest friends of the deceased; not only his friend, but adviser. For several years we served together in this House; during that time I watched his career; each day he grew upon me; not only so, but he grew upon the country until he was called to fill yonder chair, now draped in mourning. He became the Speaker of the Forty-fourth Congress, filling, and filling worthily, the position held by such men as Muhlenberg, Clay, Stevenson, Polk, Winthrop, Linn Boyd, and BANKS.

MICHAEL C. KERR illustrated in his own person one of the excellences of our form of government, the possibility, right, and power of any of its citizens to fill its highest, most honorable, and most responsible positions, provided he deserved them, deserved them by his ability, energy, and integrity. He was pre-eminently the architect of his own fortune. He had not the adventitious aid of family or fortune; but unaided and alone he climbed the ladder of fame until he had almost reached its topmost round. It may be truthfully said of him as was said of Aristides and Cato, "that he advanced himself to great honor and dignity in the commonwealth by no other means than his own virtue and industry." The young men of our country have in him a bright exemplar to cheer them on in their lonely struggles for place and position, and I only hope that like him they may never swerve from the path of high honor and unyielding integrity. In all his congressional career he labored most assiduously for his country and the Constitution; truly could he adopt the language that Plutarch applied to himself: "*This service*, I say, *is not for myself;* it is for my country." Among all his colleagues on this floor I know no one who more fixedly and constantly made the Constitution his polar star. He kept his eye steadily upon it. When any question arose in our deliberations upon which he was called to act, the first question he pro-

Digitized by Google

pounded to himself was, "Is this measure constitutional?" If not, he opposed it.

With that as his chart and compass he felt confident of guiding the great ship of state safely through all storms, however high the billows might rise or however black and angry the clouds might become. He had a living and abiding faith that the billows would subside, the clouds pass away, the stars again shine out brightly, the night pass away, and the sun of the morrow rise brightly upon the vessel and its noble crew.

I never knew a man who had stronger convictions and clearer conceptions, and these convictions he followed most scrupulously to their logical results, without turning to the right or left or stopping to see the result. The sordid, selfish arts of the demagogue or political trickster he utterly loathed. He adopted as his guide the following language of Aristotle: "Popular governments in which the constitution and laws are supreme afford no place for demagogues. Where, however, the laws are not sovereign, demagogues spring up." O, that in this centennial period, this our hour of peril, these lines and this sentiment were emblazoned upon the dome of this Capitol, written in letters of living light over the Speaker's chair, upon every public building and private house throughout our broad, beloved, and distracted land! I know of no public man of his day who more thoroughly demonstrated in his public life the sentiment of William Pitt, the Great Commoner of England, when he said, "I will not go to court if I may not bring the constitution with me."

As a debater he had few equals on this floor or elsewhere; clear, concise, and logical, as a steady opponent of jobs, rings, subsidies, and partial legislation he yielded to no one. Who of all his colleagues does not recall that clear, ringing voice of his in clarion tones denouncing what he deemed corrupt and pernicious legislation? As a presiding officer, though emaciated and feeble physically, he gave evidence of being equal to any who had preceded him,

Digitized by Google

always commanding the high respect, confidence, and admiration of the whole House irrespective of party.

He had the high purpose, the firm resolve, and dauntless courage of a statesman of the highest order. With him the blandishments of power had no influence; he yielded neither to its behests nor was allured by its trappings. While he had the very highest respect for the voice of the people *constitutionally* expressed, he heeded not the frowns of the infuriated mob goaded on by designing demagogues. He never crooked "the pregnant hinges of the knee where thrift may follow fawning."

His aims were unselfish, his hands were clean, his life was pure and full of the tenderest affection for a noble and loving wife and a fond and obedient son.

But he is no more. He has been called to his long home. His labors on earth are closed. His voice will no more be heard in these Halls. His last remains lie buried beneath the soil of his adopted State, Indiana. No more shall we meet his tall, manly form and be permitted to grasp his unsoiled hand. He will no more go in and out before us. But may we all meet him again in that better land, on that "great day for which all other days were made, for which earth sprang from chaos, man from earth, and God from eternity."

Address of Mr. Knott, of Kentucky.

It may be considered a work of supererogation on my part, Mr. Speaker, to offer a single remark in addition to what has already been so eloquently said by other gentlemen on the present melancholy occasion, yet there are certain circumstances which will perhaps excuse me, if indeed they do not render it peculiarly appropriate that I should beg the brief indulgence of the House at this time, not for the vain purpose of attempting to express my own private grief for

Digitized by Google

the death of our lamented Speaker—for at the tomb of a loved and honored friend the anguish of genuine friendship can find no voice—but that I may contribute my assistance, feeble as it may be, in crystallizing in the history of the country to whose service he dedicated the best years of his life some of the evidences of his merits derived from long and intimate personal association.

It was in the midst of one of the most refined and cultivated communities in the district I now have the honor to represent upon this floor that Mr. KERR first stepped upon the arena of active manhood. It was at the beautiful little town of Bloomfield, in the State of Kentucky, that he laid the foundation of his subsequent career of usefulness and honor while engaged as a faithful, earnest, and efficient instructor of youth. There in the intervals of his arduous duties as a teacher, which others might have devoted to idleness and pleasure, he mastered the fundamental principles of jurisprudence and political philosophy with which in after life, both as a lawyer and a statesman, he showed himself so remarkably familiar. There his indefatigable energy, his indomitable will, his unwearying industry, and, above all, his immaculate integrity, are still held up for the emulation of the aspiring youth who, in the face of penury and misfortune, would achieve an honorable distinction among his fellow-men. There those striking traits of a manly character which distinguished him through life, and which have already been so happily portrayed by the eloquent gentlemen who have preceded me, won for him the confidence, the respect, and the affections of a large circle of warm-hearted, generous friends, who, sympathizing in all his laudable aspirations and proud of his well-earned success, delighted to do him honor when he had struggled far up the rugged steeps of a justly-merited fame.

Of his early friends at Bloomfield he delighted to speak in terms of the most affectionate remembrance, and I have heard him frequently remark that the happiest, proudest moment of his life was when they welcomed him back in their midst after years of absence,

Digitized by Google

to a grand ovation to which they had invited him just after his last election to Congress.

My own personal acquaintance with Mr. KERR began in July, 1867, when I met him for the first time on the floor of this House, as a member of the Fortieth Congress. A variety of circumstances soon brought us into frequent, intimate, and confidential intercourse with each other, and afforded me the most favorable opportunities of becoming familiarly acquainted with one of the most admirable characters with which I have ever come in contact; a character which perhaps but few have ever fully appreciated in all its excellence, because but few have studied it from the same stand-point and under similar circumstances to those I was so fortunate as to enjoy.

The most remarkable trait in that character, indeed the key to Mr. KERR's whole life, public and private, was his unswerving, unfaltering, inflexible fealty to Truth under all circumstances and upon all occasions whatever. In the light of that single fact, every act and utterance of his public and private career should be viewed. It was this that led him to act in everything upon the maxim of Aristotle, that incredulity is the source of all wisdom—to take nothing for granted, but to satisfy himself by actual investigation of the real foundation as well as the ultimate conclusion of every proposition upon whatever subject that might be submitted to his mind. Hence resulted those habits of indefatigable labor, careful analysis, patient research, profound meditation, and deliberate utterance, for which he was so distinguished. It was this same devotion to the truth as he understood it that gave him the reputation among some who had not made a careful analysis of his character, of being unduly obstinate in the maintenance of his own opinions. His was truly a firmness that would have led him to a martyr's stake; but it was a firmness resulting from a conviction of duty and not from any mere false pride of opinion. It was this same fealty to truth that made him the very impersonation of personal honor and official integrity. Slow, and at

Digitized by Google

times apparently timid in arriving at his conclusions, reaching them usually after patient and laborious investigation, and ever impelled by an inexorable sense of duty, none of the blandishments of flattery, no allurement of place, or power, or fame, no threat of defeat or unpopularity, no influence of mere private friendship could swerve him a hair's breadth from the right as he understood it, or deter him from the honest, outspoken expression of his own fixed opinions. There was but one possible way to move him, and that was to convince him of his error, and when convinced no one was ever more ready to confess or retract his mistake. It was this same fidelity to truth which infused into his oratory that peculiar fervor and energy of expression which frequently characterized it, not only in stating his deliberately-conceived opinions, but when indulging, as he sometimes did, in flashes of fierce invective when his indignation was aroused by the detection of falsehood or hypocrisy; for whatever was false, or fraudulent, or in any wise deceptive, his innate love of truth led him to despise with an intensity almost beyond the reach of expression. And finally, sir, it was owing to his fealty to truth that some were led into the strangest of all possible misconceptions of his character. There were those who regarded him as a singularly cold, unfriendly man, while the truth was a truer, warmer, tenderer heart, or one more loyal to its friends, never beat in human bosom. He scorned, from the very depths of his soul, the arts of flattery and dissimulation, and had the manly courage, so rare, so difficult to find, to remind his friends plainly, candidly, and truthfully of their faults.

But, sir, I will not abuse your patience by a further analysis of the character of our dead Speaker. It stands out amid those of his compeers, a Doric column, symmetrical in its solidity, beautiful in the utter absence of all meretricious ornament, and immaculate in the material of which it was reared. Few like it illustrate the annals of our race.

Digitized by Google

Address of Mr. Vance, of Ohio.

Mr. Speaker: In rising to-day to give utterance to my feelings of personal bereavement, I feel—as one does not often feel on occasions of this character—that the loss of one is the loss of all. In giving this feeble token of my grief that we no longer have Michael C. Kerr of Indiana in our midst, I but utter what every patriotic citizen of his State and our country must feel: that our grief is no common grief, our loss no common loss, and that it will be long ere the void made by the death of our lamented Speaker will again be filled by such a man as he. When a man by the resolute force of his own invincible character attains exalted station, and is charged with the performance of important public functions—and that, too, at a time when circumstances seem such that considerations of party fealty are likely to determine the choice in favor of those who have earned recognition by partisan services, rather than that the prize should be adjudged to unostentatious merit—his removal by the hand of death is a circumstance so unfortunate as to arouse the sympathies of even the hardest of hearts. To be denied the light of his counsel and the encouragement of his voice is a deprivation of no ordinary magnitude; a national calamity that all must deplore.

Although my acquaintance with the late Speaker was formed during the latter years of his life, yet familiarity with his many excellent qualities depended not upon the length of time one was thrown in contact with him. To appreciate the manly, genial, and conciliatory turn of his mind, one has but to glance at his conduct during the organization of the present House; to know his worth and truly appreciate the most exalted phases of his character, one should be of the number of those who originally had some other preference for the Speakership. But from whatever stand-point one studies him, whether

Digitized by Google

as a supporter or as an opponent, the honest observer must acknowledge the stability and rectitude of his character, the firmness of his purpose, and the geniality of his heart. The trying flame of physical suffering only seemed to bring forth more brilliantly the golden treasures of his judgment. With a rich and varied experience, such as seems essential for a truthful knowledge of human nature, he was placed in the Speaker's chair at a time when his public career was seemingly opening before him a wide field of usefulness. The sad story of his physical decline and untimely death is written in indelible characters in the hearts of every one who during the last session saw the almost superhuman exertions he made to appear in the chair of the House and perform his trying duties—duties that had he been in ordinary health would have weighed upon him as a straw upon the arm of a giant.

Who, were the power granted him, would willingly enter into the secret thoughts of the strong man, struck with mortal disease, conscious of his infirmity, aware of its nature, and knowing only too well its inevitable end? The evils of life tell all of us that there are callings among the occupations of men which bring those who assume their duties into contact with sickness and distress, to whom such sad stories are among the daily incidents of life. A cultivated mind, and the consciousness of ability to mitigate suffering and alleviate anxiety, may be some compensation for the strain to which human feeling is subjected; but who, I again ask, not of those professions, would willingly enter into the secret thoughts of one conscious of his rapidly approaching end, and share with the sufferer the terrible distress which must arise when he sees the dark, unknown future rapidly drawing upon him, soon doomed to separate him from the present, with all its cares, all its responsibilities? To one in robust health the thought even is replete with pain. How great, then, must have been the fortitude, the power of resisting suffering, and the ability to banish thought of self in our late Speaker during all those long,

Digitized by Google

weary days when, borne down by disease and racked with pain, he still persisted in performing the duties of his office? Nothing but an abiding sense of the importance of the task devolved upon him, and a deep consciousness that it was better for him to persevere and die in performance of his duty, rather than shrink from its execution, kept him at his post at a time when all were conscious that he was wearing away his life. At a time and under circumstances when almost any other man would have dismissed thought of public cares from his mind and devoted attention to himself, Mr. KERR knew no other course than that which inspired him to let all else go, and abide by the demands of that country to whose service he had already devoted many of the best years of his life. The result we all know. Many men have fallen martyrs on the field of battle. To MICHAEL C. KERR it was reserved to offer his life and his all on the altar of his country, unanimated by the clamor of contest or the shock of battle—a martyr to conviction—one who died for his country in giving her those services she stood so much in need of.

ADDRESS OF MR. PHILIPS, OF MISSOURI.

Mr. SPEAKER: The voice of Missouri ought not to be silent on an occasion like this. As a part of the Louisiana Territory acquired from France, Missouri was first under the pupilage of Governor Harrison, of Indiana. The civil polity of her local institutions was thus impressed upon the very childhood of Missouri. Her brave and hardy yeomanry came with those of Kentucky as the pioneers who penetrated the wilds of the western bank of the Mississippi and hushed the shout of the red man, felled the forests, and blazed out the pathways for the coming legions of civilization. Allied by history and tradition, recounting the perils, privations, and achieve-

Digitized by Google

ments of a common ancestry, when Indiana presented the name of her distinguished citizen for the Speakership of this Congress, Missouri had neither prejudice nor jealousy to overcome in yielding him her support. She has cause to mourn his loss, and lays claim to a share in the glory of his name and fame as a part of her rightful heritage.

It is no purpose or province of mine to review his life. That office belongs to those who knew him best. Nor shall I offend his memory by fulsome eulogy. Nothing could have been more distasteful to him when living. "Paint me as I am," said Oliver Cromwell, while sitting to young Lely. "If you leave out the scars and wrinkles I will not pay you a shilling." Such would be the request of Mr. KERR, could he now speak to us.

He was always averse to display. He despised shams of all sorts. His character was real. Mere idealism and speculation found no place in a mind occupied and surcharged with the realities of actual life. Rugged in thought and severe in habit, the world regarded him as austere and cold. Drawn into that isolation often unavoidable to the professional man and close student, he was esteemed unsocial.

He was eminently a man of convictions. He had no model. He investigated and thought for himself. He hung not in the midair of hesitancy or doubt, but always reached a conclusion. He grappled with his subject and mastered it. Hence his convictions were not visionary or momentary. They were of the conscience acting through the judgment, and were abiding. He never yielded a principle for mere expediency. He never abandoned the right for success. He did not believe with Shakespeare in applying "craft against vice;" but he believed rather with Hobbes, that craft is "crooked wisdom; a sign of pusillanimity." Mere policy in affairs of state he regarded as too often the abandonment of the field of justice and patriotism for a triumph empty and short-lived. He carried no concealed dagger,

Digitized by Google

and while he courted no unnecessary contests he shrank not from the open field and an equal sword.

During the heated discussion had on this floor last session over the question of the surrender of Hallet Kilbourn to the District court, I met Speaker KERR near the door to the left of his chair and said to him: "What do you think of the policy of sending Kilbourn to the court and leaving the responsibility of the judgment of the court with the republican party?" With nervous emphasis he instantly replied: "It will not do at all. This matter involves one of the important constitutional prerogatives of this House. To yield it would be to place ourselves in the just contempt of the country and to confess our imbecility."

We are told by naturalists that birds of paradise fly swiftest against the wind. While the contrary winds serve to display the brightness of their plumage, in drifting behind them their gorgeous train of feathers, they gather strength as their flight is entangled with the gale. So with some men, the stormy day is better for their mental qualities than the calm. Mr. KERR's congressional career was amid scenes of almost revolutionary excitement; when political virtue and constitutional principles were subjected to unexampled tests. It was a time that tried men's souls, and how few withstood the test! It was the development of Mr. KERR. It aroused the latent fires of his soul, and with undaunted courage he stood in the forefront of the battle for constitutional liberty which he conceived to be imperiled. On the ramparts of the Constitution he stood the sleepless, intrepid sentinel. Like the chivalric Henry V on the field of Agincourt, charging the chafing, desperate Duke of Alençon, he led the serried little band on this side of the House with a skill and courage that extorted applause from even those who were impaled by his unyielding lance.

Mr. Speaker, the true heroes of this world are not always recognized. The devotion of the deluded fakirs as they mangle their

Digitized by Google

bodies and practice all manner of austerities, the reckless daring of the fireman, the animal courage of the soldier, fail not to win the applause of the common herd of men. But there is a moral heroism of man in adhering to duty and the right, in breasting the storm of popular opinion under circumstances of intimidation and temptation, of which the world takes little note, but is as grand and glorious as martyrdom itself. In these days of moral cowardice, of mock joustings and tourney-loving masses of political hacks; of the men "of mint and anise and cumin;" of empiricism and social and political shoddyism, when counterfeit pretension passes for the pure coin of solid merit and brazen impudence challenges public confidence, and admiration even, such men as MICHAEL C. KERR, who lifted against these tawdry trappings of a vicious age the blazing buckler of a more heroic epoch, are a nation's glory and the people's hope.

He was not what the world commonly calls a genius. But if genius be defined the faculty of appreciation, he has claims to the coveted gift. He certainly appreciated "the eternal fitness of things." He spoke without ornamentation, directly to the pending issue, with a depth of earnestness and stress of emphasis that convinced if it did not charm. He seems to have adopted the motto of Somers, "*Prodesse quam conspici.*" He never dropped the iron links of argument for the gossamer threads of rhetoric. If he failed in the glamour of an exuberant fancy, or seldom touched the deeper chords of impassioned eloquence, he at times glowed like the furnace in which the richer material is separated from the dross and better fitted for the uses of the world. If he was imperious in opinion, he was not an unreasonable dogmatist. If he was austere in manner and reserved in intercourse, he was no demagogue nor fawning sycophant. Idiosyncrasies and prejudices he may have had, but he never betrayed a trust, deceived or deserted a friend.

Mr. KERR was a man of inexorable honesty. His active public life lay through a period of excessive vice, of shameless profligacy,

Digitized by Google

and unblushing corruption; yet perhaps no man living or dead kept his official garments purer. No stain is on them. No unclean thing ever touched his ermine. No serpent's trail crossed his path. No cloud of dishonor shadows his grave.

When amid the season just passed, of intense party rancor, there were found those who dared attempt to asperse the unsullied name of this exalted citizen, the instinctive chivalry of the whole American people rebelled against the foul imputation. It was during this saddest hour of the night of his life I saw him most and learned the stuff he was made of. Prior to this his friends saw the danger to his life by his continued labor in the public service; but he seemed to have adopted the sentiment of the Roman patriot, *Necesse ut eam non ut vivam.* When his integrity was assailed his determination was fixed to die with his harness on.

What a spectacle that was! Disease had marked him as a victim and had him in its toils. The angel of death had kissed his wan cheeks and left the hectic flush there. The voice, one utterance of which was once a command to silence and attention to listening Congresses and multitudes, was broken and gone. His palsied limbs refused longer to bear the burden of even his emaciated body. He was almost a disembodied spirit. There was left to him his indomitable will, which seemed to refuse submission to the dominion of death. Sensible of his danger, and sensitive of his honor—the best legacy he had to bequeath to wife and child—yet conscious of his utter helplessness and dependence, he felt the breath of political intrigue and slander amid the very ice of death gathering on his face.

"How living and how deep the wound" of such assault!

Like a giant pricked and thrust by the barbed arrows of pigmies, he writhed, not afraid to die, but craving only to live to see the hour of his vindication. That hour came even though the messenger of death waited without.

Digitized by Google

With my good friend, the honorable member from Kentucky, [Mr. BLACKBURN,] I called at his sick chamber to express my sympathy and offer my congratulations. It was our last interview. His eyes, in which the fires of genius yet gleamed as if inextinguishable, spoke the emotions of a heart too full for utterance. The long, earnest pressure of the hand once so warm, but now almost cold with the touch of death, I shall never forget.

We, young and ardent, filled to overflowing with indignation at the wretch who had attempted to swear away the good name of this man, as busily as the two men of Belial swore away the life of Naboth, suggested that he be prosecuted and punished for perjury. With voice broken with intervals of difficult respiration he said, "O, no; that poor creature is unworthy of my hate. To his conscience and God we'll leave him. I am in no condition for further excitement. I would not disturb the good feeling and harmony in the House over my unanimous vindication by pursuing the matter into the courts."

What an illustration that was of his staid judgment, his lofty spirit, and undisturbed equipoise! On his tomb could be fitly written, as a tribute to the quality of his mind, *Mens aequa in arduis.*

> His star of life sunk ere yet it had reached its full promise,
> Snatched all too early from that august fame
> That on the serene heights of silvered age
> Waited with laureled hands.

But though life was sweet and luring, yet he so died that nothing in his life "became him like the leaving it."

In the old State of Virginia, the home and resting-place of his great political mentor, Thomas Jefferson, under the ceaseless vigils of wife and son and the benisons of the whole Republic, he passed to the land beyond the sea.

Digitized by Google

ADDRESS OF MR. CARR, OF INDIANA.

Mr. SPEAKER: Standing within the saddening shadows which have fallen upon this floor from the broad wings of the angel of death, who has so recently and so unwelcomely hovered over this stately Hall, and amid the flood of silent sorrows which pour in upon us on this mournful occasion, it is with great depression of spirits that I essay a discharge of the solemn duty I, in common with you all, owe the distinguished dead whose last funeral rites we perform to-day; but coming into this Hall as I do to fill the seat upon this floor made vacant by his untimely death, and from the large constituency which have so often loved to honor him while living and who revere his memory when dead, it were eminently proper that I, in my own behalf and for them, should add my assent to and express our approval of the many eloquent but truthful eulogies that have been placed, like fragrant immortelles, upon the casket of his glorious memory.

For the first time in the history of our Government has the organization of the House of Representatives been disturbed and its members saddened by the death of its presiding officer. Though often, far too often, the cold hand of that ever-unwelcome visitor has been laid upon the prominent of its honored members, for the first time has he stalked silently and remorselessly across this floor, ascended to that exalted chair, and stricken with his chilling and killing blow the head of this great national council; and this fact should give a more serious current to our train of thought on this unusual occasion.

MICHAEL C. KERR was a native of Titusville, Pennsylvania, where he was born on the 15th of March, 1827. His parents were people in moderate circumstances, and of that old, sturdy Pennsylvania stock whose children may be found scattered in every section of the country, giving life and vitality to every department of human enterprise.

Digitized by Google

He was chiefly self-educated, but studied at the Erie Academy, whence he was graduated at the age of eighteen. During his attendance at the academy, Mr. KERR became attached to Miss Coover, and immediately after his graduation married her. By teaching school Mr. KERR earned the means to defray his expenses at the Louisville University, where he received the degree of bachelor of laws in 1851. In 1852 he removed to New Albany, Indiana, and began the practice of law. He early developed those traits of character which have since made him an enduring name among his countrymen. He was elected attorney of the city of his adoption, and in the performance of the duties intrusted to him he most arduously devoted himself and attracted public attention to his abilities. At the end of one year's service he was elected prosecuting attorney for the county of Floyd, serving in that capacity but a single year, when, in 1856, he was nominated as a candidate for the legislature, and in the October following was elected. It was during this year that attention was first attracted to his powers as an orator. In 1862 he was elected reporter of the supreme court of Indiana, and while occupying the position he prepared five volumes of reports, which are regarded as the best of the entire series issued from that court.

The effectiveness of Mr. KERR on the hustings pointed to him as the leader of his party in the second congressional district of his adopted State, and on the 12th of August, 1864, the district congressional convention at Jeffersonville nominated him as the candidate of his party to represent the district in the Thirty-ninth Congress, and at the October election following he was elected by a large majority. Upon taking his seat in Congress he was assigned to two committees of the House—Private Land-Claims and of Accounts—serving with faithfulness to the interests of the public. Again, in 1866, he was returned as a member of the Fortieth Congress, and served on the Committees of Elections and Railways and Canals. In 1868 his constituents returned him as a member of the Forty-first Congress, in

Digitized by Google

which he served as a member of the Civil Service Committee, and it was during this session that he first assumed a prominence among his colleagues. In 1870 the people of the second district declared him their choice, and he was elected by the usual majority. Upon taking his seat in the Forty-second Congress he was placed upon the Committee of Ways and Means. During the two following, as in the preceding two years, he was frequently heard upon the floor of Congress in the advocacy of sound and statesmanlike views upon the subjects of the currency and taxation, and in opposition to every species of monopoly.

In 1872 Mr. KERR refused to enter the canvass for the nomination in his district. But at the meeting of the State convention he consented to accept the nomination for Congressman at large, but was defeated by Hon. Godlove S. Orth, by a majority of only 126 votes in the entire vote of the State; but he was only two years out of the House, coming in again by a great majority in 1875, when, as all the country remembers, he was chosen to preside over the deliberations of the body of which he was conspicuously and confessedly one of the ablest members.

MICHAEL CRAWFORD KERR was no ordinary man, but one formed by his Creator to fill an important mission in the stirring events of his stewardship here, and to this end he was endowed with clear conceptions, sound judgment, and a will to dare and do that which his convictions conceived to be right. But these convictions were never hastily nor recklessly formed. In the investigation of a subject brought before him for action, calmness and deliberation were always invoked, and when thus a conclusion was reached no sophistry, no mercenary motives, no sinister influences could suffice to move or sway him; but there, like the coast-rock beating backward the surging waves of ocean, he stood, fixed and immovable; and if overpowered by superior forces, like the sturdy oak whose head is bowed by the hurtling tempest, when the storm had passed he stood erect again, conscious

Digitized by Google

of the correctness of his views. In that warfare which is ever being waged between the principles of right on the one hand and the errors of wrong on the other, he always stood the unyielding and aggressive champion of honor and rectitude, armed with a falchion whose very brightness dazzled and subdued. Nor did he wait to strike until the command for the reserve to advance was passed to the rear of the grand army of noble intellects; but, spurred on by high impulses and nerved by exalted instincts, he stood in the foremost ranks with his armor ever on and his trenchant blade drawn from the scabbard.

Though weak in physical powers,

> * * * His mind
> Was formed to combat with his kind.
> Strong in his will and of a mood
> Which 'gainst the world in war had stood
> And perished in the foremost rank
> With joy.

It is not strange, therefore, that such a nature scorned to be led, but was proud to lead where honor and duty blazed the way. It was this which restrained him from yielding to the mistaken fancies or erring clamor of the masses. He was not

> * * * That soul
> Which creeps and winds beneath the mob's control;
> That courts the rabble's smile, the rabble's nod,
> And makes, like Egypt, every beast its god.

When public sentiment was right he was foremost among its advocates, but when wrong, like another Socrates, he braced himself manfully against the erring flood. In this he was truly a great man. The world hath need of all such noble natures which God hath blessed it with, and the loss of his self-sacrificing patriotism, his exalted precepts, and his noble example is irreparable. When he fell, the ranks of the gallant few with whom he fought and kept the faith lost a power they could illy spare, and where he fell there was left a vacancy in the ranks which all our prayers and tears for the regretted dead can never fill.

Digitized by Google

To this strong characteristic must be added the no less commendable traits of character which everywhere and at all times stamped him as a man pre-eminently honest and pure. Descended from an ancient Highland Scottish clan whose name he bore, he seemed to have inherited largely that sturdy, honest, and incorruptible nature which so distinguished the Wallace, the Douglass, the Bruce, and the Roderick Dhu of those better days. This attribute so inwrapped him like a robe as to shield him from the advances of the mercenary and corrupt. So strong, so marked was this phase of character that in a long and active public life, in which the bitter animosities of rivals and political adversaries were often excited, but once was an assault ever made upon it, and then the shafts aimed by envy and propelled by base designs fell harmless at his feet, covering his accusers with confusion and shame. The attempt was as harmless as the casting of a toy-dart at the Colossus of Rhodes, and as futile as an attempt to darken the heavens with a miniature cloud of dust. The investigation, like the testing ordeal for the purer metals, left him the brighter for the friction and the more universally appreciated for the seal of national approval which it stamped upon his immortal memory. To lose a public man with two such rare and desirable traits of character in times like these, when the fibers of our free institutions seem ready to burst asunder from the increasing strain produced by the degenerating tendencies of the age, adds a patriotic poignancy to our grief and an intensified depth to the shadows of a nation's sorrows, which shall be lifted only when the sunlight of better days shall dispel the dangers which brood over us like the menacing hand of a Nemesis.

Bringing into his public life and places of trust such Spartan virtues, it is not surprising that he so rapidly ascended from the lowest to the highest plane of prominence, and commanded at all times renewed and increasing confidence, admiration, and preferment, until, caught up in the ready arms of an approving nation, he was seated in that exalted chair, once cccupied by America's greatest and most dis-

Digitized by Google

tinguished statesmen, Trumbull, Macon, Dayton, Clay, and Polk—a place second only to the highest honor and most precious gift in the power of this Republic to bestow. Here, while in that proud position, presiding over the councils of a great people, shaping the legislation of a mighty nation, in the flood-tide of his prosperity and usefulness, it pleased the mighty God who holds alike the destinies of nations and individuals in his omnipotent hand to remove him from the field of his labor and place his ashes in that sacred urn, among that constellation of statesmen whose names are inscribed in characters of never-fading light upon the tablets of our history. It was a sad bereavement to his afflicted friends; it was a national misfortune, but we bow in meek submission to the decrees of that superior and divine wisdom which "doeth all things well."

It is not for me to extol the labors of the deceased while a member and officer of this House. That task were more fitly done and has been more ably performed by those of his eloquent colleagues who have preceded me, and whose encomiums I shall bear with me to the bosom of his immediate constituency with a just pride and satisfaction. To be assured that throughout all his congressional career, and much of it embracing the darkest hours of this Republic, he occupied the high grounds of statesmanship, and never for once descended to the level of the mere politician; that his utterances were ever for the needs of the whole country and were never circumscribed by the demands of mere party; that his efforts were ever for the great good of the many and never to their exclusion, in the interests of the few, confirms the conceptions formed of him at home, and makes universal the picture engraven upon the hearts of his own people.

While the deceased stood thus distinguished from the masses of men in his public life, in his private virtues he was pre-eminently a man—the highest and best type of man. While many of the most celebrated characters of history have had their glories dimmed with reflections from dark spots upon their private lives, Mr. KERR was wholly

Digitized by Google

free from any great private fault whose presence detracted from the public esteem in which he was held. He was temperate and sober, honest and upright, frugal and charitable, generous and just, conscientious and a Christian, a warm friend, a constant husband, and an affectionate father. He had his likes and dislikes, but they were distributed by reason and controlled by causes. He had his partialities and his prejudices, but they were never wholly without foundation. He had his peculiarities, but they never approached distasteful eccentricities, and with all the details of character the aggregated whole rendered him a desirable neighbor, a useful citizen, and an esteemed man.

We have inadvertently pronounced him dead. True, we have placed his mortal remains in the tomb of his fathers and his ashes are mingling with the dust from which they arose, but he is not dead. Such men never die. There has been a change, yet it has been one in which but the grossness of earth-life has been swept away, leaving only the intellectual, the spiritual, and therefore the higher and purer life, to commune with us, teach us, and lead us onward and upward. He lives in his work and example; nor will they die wholly until in the dim distance of future time the obliterating waves of oblivion shall submerge all that has been and now is, and the dark funeral pall shall be thrown over the glories of the past and greatness of the present.

As a proper closing of these solemn ceremonies, I now offer the following resolutions, and move their adoption:

Resolved, That the sad announcement of the death of MICHAEL C. KERR, late member from the State of Indiana, and Speaker of this House, is received by us in the deepest sorrow and profoundest regret, and that in his untimely decease the House of Representatives of the United States has lost an impartial, competent, and noble presiding officer, a faithful and patriotic member.

Resolved, That in testimony of our respect for the memory of the

Digitized by Google

deceased Speaker, his chair be draped in mourning during the unfinished term of the Forty-fourth Congress, and as a further evidence of our continuing esteem for the dead, the officers and members of this House will wear the usual badge of mourning for the space of thirty days.

Resolved, That the Senate be informed of the death of the late Speaker by forwarding to that body a copy of these resolutions, and that the Clerk transmit a copy of the same to the afflicted family of the illustrious dead.

Resolved, That, as a further tribute of respect to the departed officer, this House do now adjourn.

The question being taken on the resolutions, they were unanimously adopted; and accordingly (at three o'clock and forty-five minutes p. m.) the House adjourned.

Digitized by Google

PROCEEDINGS IN THE SENATE.

TUESDAY, *February* 27, 1877.

Mr. MCDONALD, (at eleven o'clock and four minutes a. m.) I desire to call up the resolutions of the House of Representatives in honor of the late Speaker, MICHAEL C. KERR, for present consideration. I ask that the resolutions be read.

The chief clerk read the resolutions of the House of Representatives, as follows:

Resolved, That the sad announcement of the death of MICHAEL C. KERR, late member from the State of Indiana and Speaker of this House, is received by us in the deepest sorrow and profoundest regret; and that in his untimely decease the House of Representatives of the United States has lost an impartial, competent, and noble presiding officer, a faithful and patriotic member.

Resolved, That in testimony of our respect for the memory of the deceased Speaker, his chair be draped in mourning during the unfinished term of the Forty-fourth Congress, and, as a further evidence of our continuing esteem for the dead, the officers and members of this House will wear the usual badge of mourning for the space of thirty days.

Resolved, That the Senate be informed of the death of the late Speaker by forwarding to that body a copy of these resolutions, and that the Clerk transmit a copy of the same to the afflicted family of the illustrious dead.

Digitized by Google

ADDRESS OF MR. MCDONALD, OF INDIANA.

Mr. PRESIDENT: It has not occurred before in our history that upon the records of the same Congress have been placed resolutions of respect to the memories of the presiding officers of the two houses. Just before the opening of the first session of the present Congress, and while many of its members were on their way to attend its sittings, the country was startled by the news of the death of the Vice-President of the United States and President of the Senate, and before they had all reached their homes at the close of the session, another national loss had been sustained in the death of the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

In uniting with the House in doing honor to the memory of its late chief officer, those of us who had the good fortune to know him well can bear witness to the great loss our country sustained, taken, as he was, in the meridian of life and in the midst of his labors, and also of that great bereavement suffered by his family and his friends; for while by his laborious and faithful discharge of the public duties intrusted to him and his unbending devotion to principle he had made for himself a position in the front rank of the public men of his country, his kind and gentle nature had enshrined him the idol of the social and domestic circle in which he moved, and when death removed him from it a void was left that can never be filled.

MICHAEL C. KERR was a native of the State of Pennsylvania, and was born at Titusville, in that State, March 15, 1827, but about the time he had attained his majority he left his native State and cast his fortunes in the then great West, and after completing his legal studies, by graduating in the law department of the Louisville Uni-

Digitized by Google

versity, began the practice of his profession in the city of New Albany, in the State of Indiana, in 1852, and from that time until his death he was a beloved and honored citizen of that State and city. He was soon called into public life, first in the line of his profession, and gave promise of attaining to its highest honors, but in a short time was elected to represent the county of Floyd in the legislature of the State, and made his first appearance in political life in January, 1857, when he took his seat in that body. My acquaintance was formed with him during that session, and it grew into a friendship that increased in warmth and strength to the day of his death. His studious habits and close attention to the duties of his position marked him at that early day as one of the rising young men of the State.

In the fall of 1864 he was elected a member of the Thirty-ninth Congress from his district and continued to serve in that body, with the exception of the Forty-third Congress, until the close of his life, having been elected its Speaker at the beginning of the present Congress. It was in this service that he became known to the people of the whole country and established for himself a national reputation, and it was in the laborious discharge of the duties which devolved upon him as one of the active and leading members of that body that a constitution not naturally strong was impaired and the seeds of disease planted which brought him to an untimely grave.

Mr. KERR was naturally a student, and his mind was well stored with solid and substantial facts, especially relating to the science of government and political economy; but after he had turned his attention to politics he studied with great care the political history of his country that he might better understand the frame-work and structure of the Government, and especially those elementary principles which underlie that structure. In his public life as an actor he always, and under all circumstances, asserted his convictions. Few men possessed a moral courage equal to him and none superior, and no apprehensions of the loss of popular favor could induce him

Digitized by Google

to stifle his conviction or compromise his principles. Indeed it may well be said that his expressed political principles were at all times but the reflex of his convictions. Not naturally a fluent speaker, yet by study and practice he became a ready and strong debater, and at times his earnestness, almost unconsciously to himself, grew into eloquence; but his constant aim was to convince the judgment of his hearers and never to influence their action by appeals to their passions or their prejudices.

But his highest qualities were exhibited in that sublime courage with which he combated the steady approach of death, and the calmness with which he looked forward to the fatal hour. Anxious to live, and yet with a painful consciousness that his days were numbered and that no mortal hand could pluck out the fatal arrow that Death had planted in his system, he seemed to rise above all fear and to move forward on the path of duty with a courage and fortitude that never for one moment faltered. He seemed to be constantly saying to himself, "I should not fear, nor yet should I wish for my last day to come; and until it does come I must not be idle nor waste my time in vain regrets." And so, Mr. President, he lived and so he died—died working on to the close of his life.

His was the true courage, "not the brutal force of vulgar heroes, but the firm resolve of virtue and of reason." He filled every station to which he was called, public and private, with honor. He honored the city in which he lived, and his name is there cherished as a household word. He honored the district which had conferred upon him its highest favors, and his memory will be long held in reverence by his people. He honored the State of his adoption, and it will preserve his name upon the roll of its most illustrious citizens. He honored the high place to which he was called by the representatives of the whole people, and for that we this day place his name "*in memoriam*" upon the records of the Congress of the nation, there to remain for all time; but we cannot restore to his family and friends

Digitized by Google

the light and life that went out from them when he was called from their midst.

Mr. President, I send to the desk resolutions for adoption by the Senate. I will state that the resolution in regard to adjournment is not now to be put.

Address of Mr. Wallace, of Pennsylvania.

Mr. President: It is fitting that we of Pennsylvania should second these resolutions and bring our tribute to the worth and the character of one of the sons of her soil. Michael C. Kerr was a type of the race from which he sprang. The physical form and mental characteristics of the man both proclaimed that he was one of those who trace their lineage and their ancestry to the hills of Scotland. The valleys and hills of Central, Southern, and Western Pennsylvania were largely peopled by them. The habits of life and the modes of thought of that race have become deeply graven upon whole masses of our people, and have in turn impressed themselves upon every section of the Republic. Wherever this people have planted themselves within our borders, there are found prosperous settlements, happy homes, and peaceful communities. Indomitable energy, an iron will, economical habits, purity of character, a hatred of shams and devotion to truth, invariably marked the best specimens of the race, and nature was only true to herself when she stamped these qualities indelibly upon the late Speaker of the House of Representatives. A blameless life, intelligent and honest performance of high public duties, the respect of all who knew him, and the warm attachments of his party to his fortunes as a safe and prudent leader, marked his public career. As I learned to know him, no trait in his character was so clearly defined as his hatred to all hypocrisy, his earnest devotion to truth. He seemed to recognize this as the chief part of every virtue. The political maxim "that those who know not how to

Digitized by Google

dissemble know not how to rule," found no believer in him. The saying of the ancient Greek, "it was for slaves to lie and for freemen to speak truth," was much nearer his political creed and practice. Vigorous in speech, logical in argument, industrious in research, and courteous in debate, it is not strange that he should come to be recognized as a leader in the Forty-first, Forty-second, and Forty-fourth Congresses, nor is it surprising that with this purity of character and party record he should be chosen to the high place in which death found him.

Standing at his open grave we acquire a profound sense of the fleeting character of earthly honors and of the brittleness of the thread that suspends us over the dread unknown. To-day it is life, with its glittering trifles, its busy cares, its choicest gifts; to-morrow, death, the grave, eternity.

To us who stand where he stood—dedicated to the public service—the record of this man's life and death is an example, clear, well defined, and luminous.

It is the proud record of an honest public servant.

ADDRESS OF MR. WRIGHT, OF IOWA.

Mr. PRESIDENT: In this country the highest type of American manhood and in the very forefront of the nobility of mankind may be found, not infrequently, those who in early professional life leave their homes in New England and other States and identify themselves with the ever alive, adventurous, and stirring people of the great and growing West. The young lawyer in this grand new arena, with prairies boundless, landscapes unsurpassed, all the experiences of an extensive practice, the friction, conflict, and yet *esprit de corps* found in court terms and court-room, circuit-court life, circuit-court travel, circuit-court acquaintance, and by his early participation in political and all the contests of a frontier and new life—such

Digitized by Google

a person, I say, finds in all education and instruction, and soon becomes the highest type of the western and American statesman, lawyer, and citizen. For in all these things there are inspiring and elevating influences. The experiences may in many instances be hard and unusually severe, but the young disciple of the law thereby passes "through the rough brake," and thus he is the more likely to "come out tried and true." He may be poor, but his poverty is his stimulant; he may have trials, but these are for his purification; he meets with reverses, but such buffetings make him even more a power in his new home; he meets with strong opposition, and this but makes his will-power still more a power; and thus each day he gives renewed evidence of that true worth, that genuine virtue which tells upon the destinies of senates, the commons, the people, and the nation, and which oft is

> Sooner found in lowly sheds,
> With smoky rafters,
> Than in tapestried halls and
> Court of princes.

To this class belonged MICHAEL C KERR, the true lawyer, the earnest prosecutor of the pleas of the State, the careful legislator, the painstaking reporter of the decisions of the highest tribunal of his adopted State, the modest and dignified Representative in the Congress of the nation, the impartial and able presiding officer of that body where he was for years among its leaders; the man of iron will, uncorruptible integrity, a noble specimen of the true American statesman. He represented, and well, the State which I am but too proud to acknowledge as that of my birth, the land of my early struggles with poverty, the State which by its kindly legislation afforded to myself as well as others the means for an education which might otherwise have been unattainable, the State to which I shall ever refer with the gratitude of a child, and to his memory, as the chosen of the people, I would assist at this time in paying some humble tribute.

Digitized by Google

It was said of the deceased that he seemed to have little special fitness for public life; and yet that he not only never attempted the arts of the demagogue, but loathed them in his inmost soul; that he loved his profession, the law, and sought its honors; that his opinions in committee and elsewhere were those of the jurist and not of the politician, and that so strong was his will and so absolute were his convictions that it was impossible for him to trim or play the time-server. Now, Mr. President, if such a man had not special fitness, entitling him to the highest places in public life, then my ideas of the true statesman are sadly at fault. The arts of the demagogue are not those of the statesman, nor do they ever fit a man for that work which leads to the upbuilding of humanity and the highest interest of our common country. In proportion as the man in public life loathes such arts, he becomes safe and wise in legislation and entitled to confidence in places of the highest trust. And so firmly impressed am I with the great conservative influence of the true lawyer, so often have I been led to bear witness to the worth and value of the able and thoughtful jurist in matters of public concern, and so highly do I prize the man who stands by his convictions, not to be turned aside by the motives influencing the trimmer and time-server, that I accept such men as having admirable fitness for public life, a fitness which leads almost necessarily to true greatness, a fitness which places its possessor in the front rank of the profession and the highest statesmanship.

The life and character of MICHAEL C. KERR bear witness that he had this fitness and belonged to this class. In proportion as we shall have such men we shall have judicious legislation and added security to our country and its institutions. We need to cast out all demagogues, all trimmers and time-servers, all acting for policy, all merely expediency legislators, all letting out or taking in sail to catch the popular breeze, all trembling, uneasy hands with fingers upon the public pulse, all whose courage shall be measured by the stock market or

Digitized by Google

the persistence of a lobby, and install in their places those who know their duty and do it, who, defying all opposition, move unflinchingly to the fulfillment of every trust, and who, when the end is reached, the result attained, feel that they have stood by the cause of their country, their God, and truth.

When the true man dies the world should indeed mourn. For such the Senate, the nation, and the friends of good government mourn to-day. He succeeded in life because those who knew him had confidence in his integrity and uprightness. He won distinction because he industriously studied our institutions and fearlessly and courageously maintained his views upon all questions demanding his attention. He took the highest rank because he marched in a straight line to his conclusions, ever exhibiting judicial fairness and the most unquestioned candor. He made friends because he had great goodness of heart, because to those who knew him best he was warm-hearted, kindly, and affectionate. He was the peer of the noblest of those around him because with good natural ability he had energy indomitable, perseverance unflinching, convictions the most abiding, and ever sought to make honest inquiry for truth.

One so panoplied and so endowed could not but succeed. The world owes such men victory, and whether the debt is paid grudgingly or otherwise, it will be extorted, and it were idle to attempt to withhold it. Wife, children, friends, parties, the nation, should ever be proud of one so gifted and rejoice in his triumphs. That we may be led to cherish his virtues, give encouragement to all to emulate his example, and enrich our own hearts by the memory of his many and varied attainments and excellences, it is meet that we should pause in our pressing duties and look, as we now do, upon his new-made grave, cast thereon our garlands of good-will, esteem, affection, love, and renew our assurance of profound sympathy and condolence for the members of the stricken household who this day most deeply mourn his loss.

Digitized by Google

Address of Mr. Bayard, of Delaware.

Mr. President: I never knew a man to whom indiscriminate eulogy would have been more distasteful and repulsive than the straightforward, single-minded gentleman whose death I now rise to deplore. Power will ever have its parasites, who cling to it, not to aid it, but to suck from it their discreditable sustenance. What the courtier is to the monarchy the demagogue is to popular government.

Michael C. Kerr could never have been either.

> He would not have flattered Neptune for his trident,
> Or Jove for his power to thunder.

He would have told the truth as he knew it, despite the frowns of a king, and with equal fidelity would he tell it to the people, even when threatening and excited by misapprehension and urged to harm by "false prophets." Mr. Kerr was one of the quiet workers of Congress, who, remote from public view, in those places where the real labors of legislation are performed did his duty in steady, painstaking conscientiousness.

The incense of popular applause was not needed to urge him to his work. But, whether in the full gaze of the public or in the seclusion of the committee-room, he was faithfully occupied in the performance of his duty.

> As ever in the great Taskmaster's eye.

Thus his fame burned with a steady luster; and as his reputation rose its base broadened upon the substantial qualities of honesty, fidelity, and sterling intellectual capacities. Although a vigorous and impressive debater, his gifts were not showy but solid, and he

Digitized by Google

forced his delicate *physique* unsparingly to make these gifts most useful to his fellow-men.

Sure the eternal Master found
His single talent well employed.

I served here in Congress with Mr. KERR during years of anxious and critical interest. We were members of a weak minority, and during our association never entered upon a contest in these halls of legislation without plainly discerning at the end of the struggle defeat awaiting us. This habitual defeat, while it did not diminish the ardor of Mr. KERR in pursuit of duty, yet wore upon his physical health, and it may be said without exaggeration that his labors in behalf of the public caused his premature death.

One feature of the pulmonary disease under which Mr. KERR sank is a hopefulness on the part of the sufferer deluding him into a belief in his recovery, even to the last faint effort of expiring nature. In such a condition of health he went into the high place of Speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States with the hand of death resting upon him, unknown to him, but unhappily visible to those who surrounded him. His fine mental powers shone undiminished, and the *man* within was high-toned and true-hearted as ever.

I well remember calling upon him at his lodgings in this city, as he lay faint and gasping for breath upon his couch, and when that fell spirit of slander, "which loves a shining mark," had aimed its relentless and poisoned arrows at his reputation, I took his wasted hand in mine and uttered a few words in reference to the shameless and futile assault, dictated by the unscrupulousness of partisan malignity. His answer was a sad smile as his honest eyes looked into mine, and a pressure of the hand responded to the unquestioning confidence I felt and had expressed that these dishonest missiles of political assault would shiver themselves against the granite base of integrity upon which his life was built. He lived to see his

Digitized by Google

slanderers promptly rebuked by the unanimous report of the committee appointed by the House to investigate the charges, condemning his accusers and exonerating him from even the suspicion of misconduct. This report was sustained by the unanimous vote of the House and the voice of honest men of all parties in every part of the Republic. The closer the scrutiny the more the moral worth of the man became apparent. His death was a loss to his country; his example should be cherished, and the memory of his life and character be embalmed in the affection and respect of the American people.

Address of Mr. Booth, of California.

Mr. President: The conditions of American life change so rapidly that representative types of American character are not likely to be reproduced. Franklin, Samuel Adams, Washington, Jackson, Clay, Lincoln, will have no historical parallels. The race of western pioneers will soon be as extinct as the Puritans, and will have no successor.

Modern life, so abounding in the use of tools, machinery, and intellectual aids, is not favorable to the formation of individuality of character, and native individuality must be strong to survive the repressive influence of custom and conventionalism. The character of Michael C. Kerr was so strongly marked that a stranger meeting him on the street would have received a distinct impression of the man.

His public career needs little reference from me. It was not my fortune to know him personally until the last year of his life—when the shadow of the dark valley was already upon him. How he struggled with pain and disease; how his iron will supplied the place of physical strength, and forced his tired body to bear the

Digitized by Google

burdens of his great office, until his breath grew too short for utterance and his feet too weary to bear their load, is known to us all.

The fortitude, endurance, courage, patience which he evinced in this struggle were typical of his character. He knew that death would conquer, but he fought for every inch of time. He had never counted the odds in any contest, and he would not even when the grim monster was his antagonist. Life with him was so earnest, that even sickness brought no respite from labor and responsibility.

Almost the whole of his manhood was spent in public office, and he died poor in worldly goods, as most men do who devote themselves to the public service. He was careful in all the details of his duties. He never spared himself, and nothing was so minute as to escape his conscientious attention; nothing which pertained to duty was insignificant in his eyes.

His purposes were so intense, that I think his life was serious even to sadness. Pursuing his own line of thought, amusements and society had little attraction for him. He was fond of general literature, but disciplined his taste even in that to make it tributary to the main purpose of his life. He was slow in forming his opinions, but once formed they were a part of his life. No one can penetrate the inner life of another and realize the long preparation, the conflict of doubt, the struggle of intellect, the throes of thought which precede the opinion so positive in utterrance, or the decision that seems instant as lightning when occasion comes.

In the discharge of his public duties Mr. KERR was never moved by the pleadings of immediate special interests, however powerful or plausible, to neglect or betray the interests of the people from whose loins he sprang, whose burdens he respected. He would not yield to the solicitings of friendship, the blandishments of flattery, or the temptations of interest. He was almost destitute of imagination, and had little enthusiasm, but his intense earnestness gave to his utterances a fervor that had the semblance of both. He never

Digitized by Google

sought the easy way of doing, but instinctively took hold of the heavy end. Life with him meant work, not dalliance; duty, not pleasure.

With his opinions on the great questions that culminated in and grew out of our civil war, I differed *toto cælo*. They are differences I gladly forget at his grave. Cannot we all now allow these differences to be buried in the grave of the past? Can we not regard the conflict through which we have passed as an inevitable event of history which no statesmanship could avert, and respect its awful loss of life as a common sorrow, a sacrifice which fate had decreed to liberty and union?

If we cannot; if strife must perpetuate itself and passion harden into hatred, the sun of our national existence which rose upon so fair a morn will be hidden by clouds and go down in tempests.

In times of great political excitement like these, the man who dies in public station falls like the soldier in the heat of battle; when the lines close, comrades press forward, and the fight goes on. In the distant home something passes from the life of love which was most dear to it, and which nothing that is or shall be can ever replace. We miss the voice that was strong in debate; others, the tones that were tender with love. A manly presence has gone from our midst; the footsteps that gladdened a home have gone down to the grave.

The tribute of respect which we pay seems formal from oft repetition; there is a sorrow which is speechless, a grief which is tearless.

Thus through life every heart must bear its own sorrow, its own grief, its own precious memory, sanctuaried from the eye of curiosity, where the voice of sympathy cannot reach, and the touch of healing cannot come.

Address of Mr. Morton, of Indiana.

Mr. President: I have known Mr. Kerr since 1861. Our personal relations were never intimate. We were never thrown together

Digitized by Google

in any way. I met him from time to time and have been familiar with his political history and reputation.

We lived in a State somewhat distinguished of late years for the bitterness of its political contests. While he and I were on different sides, yet our personal relations were always good, and I now take pleasure in bearing testimony to his memory.

The character of Mr. KERR for integrity has never been impeached. Some charges that were recently made against him since he was Speaker of the House of Representatives were not believed at all by his political antagonists. I can say that the republicans of Indiana did not believe these charges. I did not, and it may be said that Mr. KERR's character for integrity has never been impeached or suspected. I take pleasure in bearing testimony to his high character as an honest man. Mr. KERR has always been regarded as occupying a higher plane of politics than most politicians. He has been regarded as a man who was devoted to principle and who pursued principles to their logical results. Intellectually he was very able; a man of fine ability. He was a student. He has always been regarded as laborious. Especially was he a student of political economy. He was much better acquainted with the principles of political economy than most men in public life. He has made them his study for years. He was always regarded as a student, with a fine knowledge of general literature and of history, but especially a student in all those branches of knowledge relating to politics and the Constitution of his country. His name will be remembered with pride and with affection in Indiana. He was one of her most highly favored and gifted sons, and it gives me satisfaction to bear testimony to his patriotism. I believe he was a devout lover of his country and went for that which he believed was for the best. I have always given him credit for his integrity, for his patriotism, and for love of his country, and the strongest testimony which I can bear to the character of Mr. KERR is to say that he was regarded by men of all parties in Indiana as an

Digitized by Google

honest man, an able man, a patriotic man, and that his death was mourned by all his neighbors and by all who knew him, without distinction of party.

In some respects he was a remarkable man. His ability was not of the common order, and, as was said by the Senator from Delaware, [Mr. BAYARD,] it was more solid than it was showy, with a great power of analysis and with great capacity for labor. But few public men have died who have left behind them a clearer or a better record than MICHAEL C. KERR, and he died possessing the esteem of good men without distinction of party.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Clerk will now report the resolutions offered by the Senator from Indiana, [Mr. MCDONALD.]

The Chief Clerk read as follows:

Resolved, That the Senate has received with profound sensibility the sad announcement of the death of Hon. MICHAEL C. KERR, late a member of the House of Representatives from the State of Indiana, and Speaker of that House.

Resolved, That as a mark of the respect entertained by the members of the Senate for the high character, pure patriotism, and eminent public services of the late Speaker of the House of Representatives, they will wear the usual badge of mourning for thirty days.

The resolutions were agreed to unanimously.

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google